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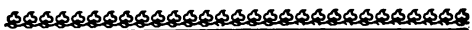
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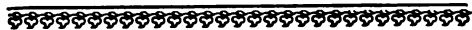
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FROM

President C. W. Eliot.



THE DREAM
of my YOUTH



THE DREAM
of my YOUTH

By E. P. TENNEY.

AUTHOR of "CORONATION," ETC. &



I dream dreams and
see visions, and then
I paint my dreams
and my visions.

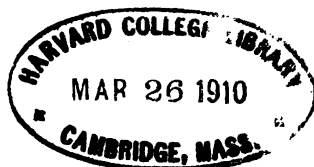
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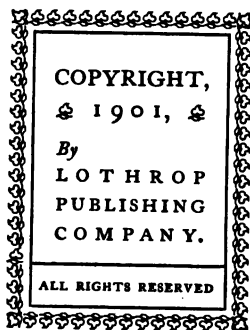
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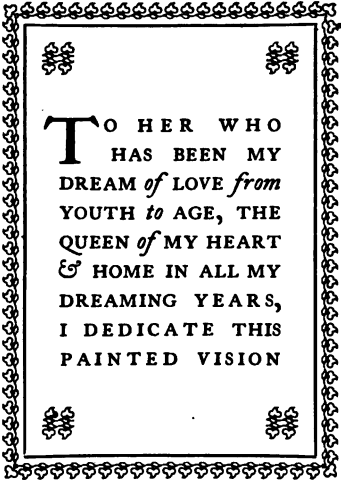
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Pres. C.W. Eliot



A decorative rectangular border with a repeating floral or scrollwork pattern surrounds the central text. Inside the border, at each of the four corners, there is a small, stylized floral ornament.

TO HER WHO
HAS BEEN MY
DREAM *of* LOVE *from*
YOUTH *to* AGE, THE
QUEEN *of* MY HEART
& HOME IN ALL MY
DREAMING YEARS,
I DEDICATE THIS
PAINTED VISION

C O N T E N T S

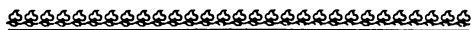


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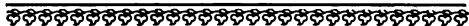
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THE DREAM
of my YOUTH



The Dream of My Youth

I

THE "H"

THE flight of the Frying Pan through the darkness, up hill and down, with a dash and almost a smash, quite took my breath away. But the Old Man Peter kept the beast in the road or somewhere near it, till we reached the "H." Just why he called her the Frying Pan I never knew, unless for the way she slewed the low and broad runnered sleigh along those hilly leagues of November.

The "H" I found to be the abandoned "Corner" of a New England town on that elevated platform of a thousand feet, from which the White Mountains rise—or rather

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the White Hills as early named, and as Peter always called them after living in the Rockies.

Since the time when the squire and the grocer had moved away, some fifty years before, the Corner had slowly and surely gone to decay. The grassy depressions of cellars dug by the early settlers; mossy wells which Peter religiously disturbed with buckets to keep them sweet; and rows of temple pillars, maples of a century, and elms of amazing girth and shade—these alone, and the farm house where Peter lived, comprised the “H.” The long lines of the letter “H” ran east and west. The cross line was a country road, which made an angle with the two “H” lanes once built to accommodate that populous Corner, which was in this sparse region almost a city when twenty houses were standing within half a mile of the store.

The Old Man Peter lived here, for mid-way convenience of reaching parochial work at Hollyhock and Moderation. A musical brook with sunny slopes, sweet meadow lands

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shut in by a horizon of hills, a roomy house, and solitude, made life to him desirable at the "H."

"If fevered nerves and my lately heated life cannot be calmed here," remarked Peter, "then I'll strike for Labrador, where house lots and farms are even cheaper than at the 'H.'"

To be sure the flying Frying Pan, so black and strong, did much to ameliorate my own condition while there; and I could see that she served Peter as well as an electric motor would have done along the exciting streets of Hollyhock and the quiet ways of Moderation.

"The Pan was wild when I bought her a year ago," said my Nephew as we flew like a kite around his parish next day. "But I have the greatest trick you ever saw for licking a horse; I do it with sticks of candy."

It was like riding the forked lightning, up hill and down, all over Moderation. The people there live in pot-holes like eels. The rims of high hills separate the school "dees-

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tricts ; ” yet this Frying Pan mounts the hills like a four-legged balloon.

“ There’s really only one level patch within ten miles square,” said Parson Peter ; “ and that is made into a trotting park—in order that the farmers’ boys may ascertain whether, by dint of urging, their colts can go faster than a walk.”

This horse racing item was cautiously given me, as our tearing Flyer, of energy inexhaustible, was outward bound for Moderation South, or the South Road as the local idiom named it. It was five miles. “ The ‘ H ’,” said Peter, “ is just five miles from every notable point in this quaint world of the uplands ; five single, or five in joints. Five miles to the Brier Neighborhood ; and five to Hollyhock Square ; five to Hollyhock Dam ; and five to Poverty Pond. Five to Moderation Corner, and five to Moderation West. It is five to Picked Mountain ; five to Mt. Rheumatiz ; five to the gem of waters, Witch Hazel Mountain Lake ; and five to that mirrored glory of the hills Ne-wich-e-

wana. To North Moderation is two times five, and just as far to Moderation East; ten miles to Righteous Ossipee, and ten to the Hopper; ten to Ragged Hill and Buttermilk Hollow; five thrice to Tumble-Down Dick, and four times five to the top of Blue Job, or the bottom of Chocorua Pocket. But the Frying Pan despises the miles, and liltly flies from peak to peak, from hollow to hollow."

As I'd not seen Old Peter in a year, I could but rally him upon his rugged physique: "Your broken health and tumbling castles of former days made me think you'd never be yourself again. But now you are as easy-going and tough as Methuselah."

"Oh, yes, I remember him," replied Old Peter. "At five hundred, he would not bother to build a house, when he found he could not live there more than five centuries."

"You rode astride a shuttle meteor so long between the Rockies and the Sea, that I am glad to see you with a moderate kind of a horse like Frying Pan."

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“You notice, Uncle, that our civilization largely consists in always running to a fire; and when I’d had too much of it, I took to the woods, away from the clang and the crash. Here I time my life by other orbs.” Saying this, he let a loose rein on Flyer, who never would have been hit by lightning, if she had a fair start.

“When that landslip took place,” I remarked, “which dropped the underpinning from the Dream of your Youth, I made up my mind that you would go under.” Saying this, I touched the ticklish hide of the Frying Pan with the silky end of the tall whipstock; and she came to a standstill.

It was one of her peculiarities. So we sat there an hour and a half. My nephew did not appear to resent my meddling with his jehuship; still he humored his balking jade in every whim. I sang a gentle song as only I can sing; but even that failed to frighten the beast from her tracks. At the end of an hour, I looked, therefore with much complacency far down the road, where I could

see a jag of hemlock bark coming to meet us. That, I fancied, would prove a starter.

"Sometime ago, I made up my mind not to be hurried," remarked Peter. "That western earthquake shock affected me, as if I'd had my legs shot off by a cannon ball. But when I got up, and went about my business, I soon forgot it; and found the globe as firm as ever."

For my part, I kept one eye awake to watch that crawling jag of hemlock. It was smallish, and piled high; and it was apparently loose-to-measure on the sled. A tall, well formed, yet clumsy figure, sat upon the top.

"Well, Peter," I said, slowly, when I'd sized up the hemlock man, "if I'd made such blunders as you did, I would have up and died of chagrin."

"That's what you say, Uncle, but it is as wicked to worry as to blunder. It is as foolish to look behind despairing, as to fail in foresight. Even if black stars collide, the dissipated matter at once begins to reform, as

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a new creation from chaos. It is against nature to stand still and appeal to God or man for sympathy. To be up and on-going, this pertains to the orderliness of the universe."

"But, Peter, you lost your Dream."

"Oh, no. That was not the Dream of my Youth."

"What then?"

By this time, the hemlock bark was drawing nearer at a snail's pace. The white thin-ribbed horse-power limped a little, but was moving in what might answer as an apology for a go-as-you-please trot—slightly stimulated by a languid "Get ep" from the driver.

"My Dream, Uncle, is my calling, whatever it is. It is a new life daily, in which I awake to take present advantage of my age and experience."

The attention even of Pan was now diverted to John Jacklin's horse coming on apace, a turtle's pace. The turtle stood low, compared with the stack of bark and Mr. Jacklin's smoke-stack figure atop. I could

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now see John's pipe leisurely puffing out volumes of smoke in whiffs against a slight southerly wind; so that the queer rig was sailing down upon us like a silent steam tug.

Peter, with all his age and experience, could but observe Jacklin's long white beard and flaring red stockings; white and red, notable afar, gaily ornamenting that dark jag of hemlock. The old man Jacklin wore a skull-cap with a worsted ball on top. He pulled at the worsted ball, as if to doff his hat to the minister; and his eye brightened at our situation as he steered his craft into the ditch and the bushes to go past us.

"My Dream," resumed Peter, when the fresh-featured man of sixty had recovered the road, "includes tranquillity. It is as much my ideal to sit in the sun on this solitary table-land, and listen to the partridge, as it is to volunteer martyrdom in frontier missions. I rejoice in the morning light, in crisp air, in rustling leaves, in drifting snow, just as I do in the phases of moral enterprise. Serenity, self-repose, forgetfulness of all

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fleeting and fevered anxieties,— this is in the Dream of my Youth. I love the sense of roominess which I have in flitting over this wild pasture country. I have lived so much in public that I am glad to live the life of a bird. I have perfect rest in fitting myself to my sphere to-day; and if it be idleness, I take to it. Not even knowledge can tempt me.”

It was a very small “public,” to be sure, that my Nephew had ministered unto, not bigger than a bush to a bird. But I was glad to learn that his buoyant nature easily lost sight of sorrows past—the chopping down of his bush—to wing the sunny skies of new hopes and aspirations.

With my practical hard sense, if not a certain pig-headedness, I had always looked on Peter as a dreamer. With face uplifted to the constellations, how could he discern all that was transpiring around him? It was, therefore, indeed a benison that he imagined himself always employed fully in something useful, even if to me, with my large outlook

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on life, his present affairs seemed to be of little moment.

Perhaps of as little moment, as the dignified tail-wagging of Carlo Cappell just now passing us. Looking up, I saw his boy master, Anglo Cappell, with a wagon-frame load of meal on runners. Then the dog Don Werdall came up behind. Then I saw Mr. Mylam with a wheel on his shoulder; then Ed Beamsley with a wheel; then Dick Ford with a wheel; then another wheel and Frank Walters. Then I saw a long carriage pole with a shoulder under it. This entire procession I saw slowly trotting in a measured dog-trot, through the ditch past us, bound for the wheel shop at the South Road.

My clerical Nephew now condescended to alight, going to Pan's head. Having wound her up by twisting her ear, he licked her with a stick of candy,—and then we drove on.

Resuming my meditations, I knew my Nephew too well to take stock in what he said about his quietness and calm content in

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this placid home at the "H." He would, I knew, stay there long enough to get up a head of steam, and then fume and sputter till the high pressure should compel him to move again upon some great highway of the world. Still I listened to his dreaming voice:

"I see in vision the guitar of Gautama, with string so drawn as to be sharp, or so slack as to be voiceless, or sweet toned by medium tension. To make my soul such an instrument and keep it in tune, is always, Uncle, one part of the Dream of my Youth. It is much more important to me, both for this life and the next, that I gain sweet tone, than that I do this or that in the world of action outside myself. Indeed, all that I may attempt to do is mainly of use as it relates to the tension of my mental strings; since, as to doing the world's work, God has a hundred hands, any one of which is more skilled than mine, though none more willing to work at whatever falls to it."

I had always sought to tease my Nephew

by calling him the Old Man Peter. This was the grotesque pet name I gave him as a boy, when he played at the foot of my garden by the sea. If, even then, he was prematurely old, now, when he had aged so much by overwork, I could see that he still had at heart a fountain of undying youth, the energies within of a thousand lives reviving.

“So, old Man,” I said, “you are likely to go on with your tune forever in these northern snows. What are you but a bear emerging from his hibernacle, with no sense of winter’s inconvenience save slight loss of adipose tissue?”

It was the only thing that really worried me about Peter, that he was afflicted with insomnia in the daytime in that sleepy town.

“In this tough climate and hard farming country,” remarked the Old Man, with a Hibernian mouthful of mixed metaphors, “I Peter, the Man of Rock, send down new roots with a mental elasticity that never loses rebound, and rise to wing with new aspira-

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tions and inexhaustible resources, doubting not that the visible universe will stand by me. Whoa!"

Our errand at South Moderation was to find Ichabod Hodge and carry him to the "H." He lived upon a height of land which gave us a matchless view of the White Hills, with their glory of gleaming snow; but he had built a barn between his house and the mountains, so that the rose tints of the morning, and the ridges of gold, and the noon-day glitter would never draw off the eyes of his girls from their dishes or of his boys from their woodpile.

Ichabod had just returned from California, where he'd had a pair of live-oak lungs put into him; and now he was about experimenting on the long dry winter of Moderation. He had a fancy that he might survive as easily as the live-forever plants in his front yard now buried in the early snow. He took the Flying Pan reins, and mounted our pung, riding well forward on a box, while Peter and I were glued to our comfortable seat

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in the enclosed sleigh frame, which we had loosely stuck to the runners. Ichabod's ears were as deaf as the box he rode on; so they could not catch our words, so wise.

"The main thing," said Peter, "which has given me a new grip on life, is that perpetual renewal of force which comes from the professional bias born in me. Whether it be hereditary impulse, a prenatal determination, or whether the Unknown, to me unknown, wrought early, fingering the fibres of my being when I was a babe, I know not; but this I know, that I have little more conscious choice of destiny than a rose,—and it is the Dream of my Youth and purpose of my manhood to make the most of my predestined employment, which has been the felicity of my childhood, the crowning fortune of my manhood, and the supreme happiness of all my days."

At this moment, Ichabod and the box and the Pan and the pung-runners went off and left us. It was pitch dark, and we found ourselves still glued to our seat, sitting bolt

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upright against the sleigh-back, the whole body of the sleigh having slid off through the breaking of a bolt; so that we were left in the middle of the road in what we should have called a cradle-hole in February, but now it was a defect in the road unmended after the fall rains. Yet our somewhat stilted conversation went on.

For his own sake, as for the sake of his true-blood Uncle, whose name never crosses my lips since he was glorified, I had an ill-concealed affection for Peter in spite of his erratic notions of life, and what I considered lack of balance in his conduct of affairs. He was cranky, as I thought,—a good crank to make things go, that, else, would never budge; still the world discounts a crank. His vast energies recognized no defeat; and if he felt chagrins, they were well masked.

“Peter,” I said, tucking the wolf-skin robe around my feet, “I have been thinking that now you are clear of the grave, you will begin over again righting the world’s wrongs. Yet, specifically, what do you pro-

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pose to do with all the vigor that you have picked up in this hill country?"

"You may be sure of one thing," he answered, "that the world much begrudges the space to record its woes; but he who has joys to tell, finds room enough. Our world is so made up that sorrow is not artistic, unless the cloud be turned to the sun to show the silver lining. If a planet swings the skies, as some say, black, lugubrious, I am sure it is not our earth, which needs but slight renewal to sing like heaven."

"Well said, my boy. If you can tinker over Hollyhock until it is musical, you'll do a job that is better worth a monument than if you put in your time in telling what you know about your own ill-starred days."

Ichabod came back in an hour, stating that the Flying Pan had hit the ground only in the high places.

II

ELDER SAM AND THE QUEEN

HERE dawns a new chapter of life near Moderation. Its true title is Sameness; there being no perceptible difference between days or hours or events in this happy locality. The parlor I occupied belonged to Elder Sam, a Bullockite brother, who rented half his house to Peter. We cracked so many jokes there as to dislocate certain bricks in the aged chimney, and fairly shake up the twenty-five feet of stove pipe by which Peter warmed his study, which was over my head. I forgot to mention in my former chapter that Peter's ideal of life, the Dream of his Youth, included a few jokes. It was this robust good wit that kept him from taking life too seriously.

My Nephew wanted to be healthy, and

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said a good deal about it, so that in the course of an evening we cracked for his health half a peck of butternuts and roasted a peck of apples; and the half which his delicate health did not allow him to eat we sent in to the Elder Weeks, who was big, brawny, broad shouldered, and four inches above six feet in his boots. He was one of those men who had double teeth all round, and if he was in a hurry about nuts, he did not always wait for a hammer. And then, too, he had six daughters, and four sons who were all boys, to help him out in the matter of a peck or so before bedtime.

"I tell you what it is, Uncle," said my Nephew, laying down his lap-stone, "if I had Elder Sam's physique, I should not have broken down so many times at critical moments in my life work."

"You might say, rather, that if you'd had the Elder's caution, and prudent management, and outlook for himself and family, you would never have placed yourself in the precarious circumstances you've had a pre-

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dilection for, where you have had to kill yourself with work to get out alive. If you'd not had so much natural jollity of disposition, I should have preached your funeral sermon long ago."

"What would you have said?"

"I should have said that this boy died for lack of the oil of joy to lubricate life's axle. When indeed you were a boy, there was nothing in your education so much to my mind, as your perpetual desire to dance or sing a comic song. This made the holy hymns and sobriety, you were born to, more bearable to your nerves, keeping them in balance. The cultivation of good humor in a child is like putting steel springs under his life load, to smooth the jolting in rough places. Outside of a sunny temper, a keen sense of the ludicrous, a perception of the humorous side of life, is one of the happiest of mental endowments."

An explosion of six giggles and four snickers in the entry at this moment led me to open the door a little wider and introduce

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the Elder's ten infants, who had reached the bottom of the front stairs in their attempt to go to bed. I seated them cross-legged in a solemn row in front of my parlor fire-place; and Peter kept them quiet by telling them a few credible bear stories of Rocky Mountain camp-life. And then their procession was formed, and they walked slowly to the upper part of the house; pausing and meditating upon each one of the mysteriously musical, creaking, squeaking, groaning steps of the Elder's patent burglar-alarm stair steps.

It was Peter's theory and mine that there is no such magnetizer as sleep, so that we sat by the flickering firelight till after midnight, in order to be sleepy before morning. My bedroom parlor was adorned overhead with hanging corn on braided husks. And a big bunch of cat-tails stood in the corner next the closet. Portrayed upon the wall paper were any number of ruined priories, grotesque, and illuminated by very ghostly moonlight. Pictured upon the blue paper window shades was a flower pattern, imported by Elder

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Weeks from the planet Mars. At either door were small braided mats, much worn; their faded colors slightly lighting up the smooth and well scrubbed floor of unpainted pine. Strong wind currents poured through the door and window cracks; and the closet, as large as a queen's bedroom in one of the old-time Scotch palaces, had a broken window pane which kept up a good draft through the finger-wide openings at the top and bottom of the door. A bunch of turkey tail feathers, tied to a stick, stood at an angle of the great fire-place to brush the immense granite hearth, which had been little smoothed by the feet of three generations.

In this quaint apartment, after the Weeks's foot patters had ceased on the stairway, Peter entertained me with a delightful love story, of his wife Queen Whitney, a royal woman fitly named the Queen. In my Nephew's school-keeping days, he had been her teacher, finding her a shy girl, of singular capacity undeveloped; gifted with physical grace and comeliness; and, what was most

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needful, good sense enough for two. It was long before her mother would consent, but it was said she might marry, if she cared to, after a good course of schooling. Peter almost lost her; or rather she was persecuted by a tall, handsome, black-eyed, fiery-tempered southerner, whom she met at a Kansas college. He followed Peter for months after his marriage to kill him. My Nephew had to turn, and wind this way and that, like a hunted fox, and was greatly relieved when his rival was hung in the Indian Territory.

Peter, however, had never really had a home till now; his life having been spent in going hither and thither for a frontier mission. Now he had his own home, and the "H" was to him half an acre of paradise.

I have noticed that a married man always rises from misfortune sooner than a bachelor; for, amid his crashing worlds of work, he still has a home,—in which his self-respect is maintained and in which his mind is soothed. His wholesome happy home had been a potent factor in mending Peter's shat-

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tered nerves ; aided by the stillness of delightful solitudes in a sparsely settled region.

My old boy Peter, I found to be, like most half invalids, rather morbid on the subject of keeping well. I don't think Elder Weeks ever gave a thought to his health, but his tenant was half the time talking about the importance of physical vigor. He had reason to, having failed, some half dozen times in his life, to tide his affairs over a crisis, because he was physically unequal to the strain put upon him. I could see now that he had health enough for Hollyhock and Moderation, but not enough for work more difficult for which he had ample endowment, and which he had carried on successfully for years till the burden proved too great for him.

He had, decidedly, a high sounding way of speaking of it ; in an artificial, awkward-stepping style, like some of his sermons. Near twelve I began to be drowsy, and I looked with longing eyes at the luscious grape clusters which were painted upon the

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high head board of my bed, wondering if they would drop, in case I should be so happy as to go to sleep with my mouth open. I was so sleepy then, that I can now but barely keep in mind the incongruity of the sentiment expressed by Peter, that it was part of his unattained life Dream to gain such physical strength as might come from feasting upon the marrow of beasts of prey (instead of grapes), or invigorating his constitution by breath divine out of the charmed north (through the cracks in the closet door), as the earth absorbs the radiant energies of the sun.

"My son," I said somewhat sleepily, "it would be for your health to go to bed."

"I should have despaired years ago," replied Peter, "if I'd not been fond of fighting, like Isaac Barrow, D.D.; or boxing, like Andrew Fuller, D.D.; or rolling bowlders, like Adam Clarke, D.D.,—that is, in my boyhood days. It is wicked boys who never fight, that do not live out half their days. I have just about enough of the old Adam in me to

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keep me going. Unless I am a barbarian in respect to keeping my body uppermost I despair to do my work. This, notwithstanding Paul's keeping his body under,—which solely referred to self-control. Fresh air, and wholesome food, and so sharp a separation from the herd as to nibble enough to live on, a little judicious looking out for number one,—this is what I need, according to my brother Weeks, who often speaks his mind. I am glad I have a touch of Romany blood in me; and, stout as he is, I can throw Elder Weeks at wrestling. If I did not get my wrestling points from Plato, I dreamed that he taught me how to do it, which answers my purpose. With all my heart I cling to a certain savagery, as the physical basis for a life of piety and usefulness; savagery, or college athletics, I do not care which."

After this, Peter kept his old Uncle awake an hour, in detailing certain physical exercises he was practicing, to hinder loss of magnetic energy, and to store up superfluous

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vitality; charging himself like a battery. So, he said, the natural laws are as effective to run a holy ministry, as to run a steamboat or a watch; which move only in obedience to those forces which keep the planets rolling.

III

A WITCH HAZEL GOLD POINTER

THE true title of this chapter is Monotony, only another phase of life at the "H."

I rose betimes, and tried the hinges of the little red gate between the maples, and examined the crystal bridge over the brook, and drilled a hole through the ice to feed the fishes; and then went to the barn to count Elder Sam's live stock,—four oxen, three cows, six young cattle, twenty sheep, two horses, a flock of hens and turkies, a shaggy dog and a very handsome cat with tiger stripes.

"I s'pose, Parson," said the Elder to Peter, who was milking, "you wouldn't be mad ef I should give you a turkey for Thanksgiving."

"Oh, no," I hastened to say, "for my part I shall be very grateful, since I am one of the boarders."

I helped the Elder find his turkey; and then resumed my mathematical studies by counting Peter's hens.

"I would not take any interest, Old Man," I said after a time, "in your keeping hens, if I had not known you in your better days."

"These days are good enough for me," answered the rough voice of Elder Weeks, whom I had inadvertently addressed, Peter having gone to the house with his pail. "The hen business is good if you only mind it. The Lord can feed a prophet by hens just as easy as He can by ravens."

Peter's Helen now appeared; and I asked her about the wild flowers, having heard that the region is one of great botanical interest.

"The most abundant wild flour, at this season of the year, sir, is Indian meal; and Johnny Bannock is waiting for you at the table."

I found, too, that Peter's ravens had laid

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a nest full of fresh eggs on the breakfast table.

"The reason I keep hens," said the parson, "is to discipline my mind for working the Dutch Oven School."

"The reason I keep hens," said Helen, "is so that the Hollyhock school marm next summer can wear an 'omlet' round her neck to keep off evil spirits."

And Peter's baby, too, had the hen fever:

"My dorking is a mason,
A-laying eggs of china;
Her nest an old wash basin,
With hay thrown in to line 'er."

"It is only last night, Uncle," said Queen, "that I heard my husband reckoning in his sleep:—'if two hens lay three eggs a day; no, if three hens lay two eggs a day,—Oh, Queen, how many eggs ought a hen to lay anyway?'"

"My people do not want an agricultural minister," said my Nephew. "They say they are all farmers, and they want their

minister for something else. And my deacon Zechariah says that he has known some folks to make a good deal of money by not keeping hens, even in the country."

After breakfast we all turned to and tackled the twenty-five feet of stove-pipe in the study that had been dislocated by our earthquake laughter too near the fire-place in the parlor below.

"Unjewelled people," said Queen, eyeing sharply my gold watch and gold spectacles and rather loud seal ring, "become used to doing all sorts of things; plumbing in summer, and piping in winter."

"A Yankee woman," I replied, "needs no apology for doing what needs to be done. If you set to rights this study stove, so that 'The Cherub' will not smoke in the presence of ladies, it will be a true angelic accomplishment."

We ran that pipe two feet west by south; then made a right angle and shot for the ceiling five feet upon a line bearing west north-west seven degrees from perpendicu-

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lar ; then ran three feet due west at an angle of forty-five degrees through the ceiling and chamber floor, into a drum three feet high ; thence three feet skyward at an angle of ten degrees from perpendicular leaning north-west ; then made a right angle and sent her on a bold leap like a suspension bridge nine feet north-west-by-west to a chimney.

“ We’ve done what is fitting,” remarked the equable parson, “ and now we’ll try Witch Hazel, where four towns corner at the top.”

The afternoon was mild, with a southeasterly breeze. And we could see a haze coming in from the far away sea, and darkening all that side the horizon where the hills sank away into high ridges and into elevated plains toward the coast.

In all our ride and mountaineering we talked over the Petrine poverty problem. I felt once more out of patience with him, that he had never looked out sharply for himself and his family, in all his years of self-denying pioneer service. If he’d had ordinary

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prudence in caring for his own, in the place of what I called cranky self-devotement, he would not have been puttering round with one Leghorn, two Black Spanish, one Plymouth Rock, one grey hen, and two yellow of a breed to me unknown,—or wasting his precious hours doing the work of a tinsmith.

“Oh, yes,” replied Peter, “instead of piping, we could have saved our time to go fishing, or climbing some other mountain, or even stringing together a few dry bones of theology. Our time seems to be very valuable. For my part I’d as soon waste time one way as another, if it is a waste to do the things needful in ordinary domestic circumstances. I would not live so far away from the experience of the average home as to despise trivialities. I might as well divert my mind by playing with a stove-pipe, as Webster his mind by fighting gnats in traveling marsh fields. It is just as much a part of the Dream of my Youth to sympathize with what you call homely conditions of life, as it is to write sermons or read poetry. It is a poem to

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beautify the ordinary employments of nine persons out of ten on this globe by doing the nearest duty in a right spirit. The Greeks say that it is natural wealth to be contented; and according to our New England wisdom, the poor are they who feel poor. My pocket book is as dry as a contribution box, and I have no legacy but love to leave to my family. But we have few wants, save that we want to square all our accounts with the world. Were I daily discontented now, I should, if I had more means, still find fault, at finding greater wants unmet. My work here does not require me to live expensively. I have health and no fear; my wife is a saving, self-denying, plucky woman; and our children learn what the world is like. Helen came home from the city last week, saying that to her small mind it seems to be a happy providence if wealth is bestowed upon some to whom personal beauty is denied, and happy if easy circumstances make life bearable to any who are narrow-minded and not very intelligent. The best part of our coun-

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try parish people are very rich in the Greek sense. They desire little save some high quality in their enjoyments. They are, in respect to conscience and intellectual acumen, among the world's well-to-do people. If they do not have what they like, they like what they have. They stand in need of few things, and are easily satisfied as to quantity, and are wealthy in the sense of having wealth; being as well satisfied with a little as those who have more things or more means to buy. 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.' "

"That's all good," I answered, "but what I find fault with is this. You have ability to earn, and have earned a great deal. What has become of it all?"

"Much has gone for domestic illness or infirmity; and much into the Inferno of moving goods hither and thither over the face of this planet; and much into the self-devotement of my mission life; and all else to enterprises unselfishly conceived but imperfectly carried out through my fault. The

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ability to earn is not necessarily the ability to save; it is a different faculty. Prudent management is not hereditary, it is acquired by experience and afterthought as well as forethought. It is only by experience that business men learn to provide against seasons of depression and panic. In an ill-balanced life, all one's energies are apt to be turned in the direction of his bent, and the service is often invaluable to the world; but such a man's best gift is not an all-round business talent. My calling as such has not led me to make a specialty of earning and saving, and my theory of an unselfish life has led me to undervalue the habits of thrift which are at the bottom of benevolence toward others. You do not blame me, Uncle, so much as I blame myself. My training in life should have been differently balanced."

This remark of Peter scored one against me, since I myself had trained him; and in doing it I had neglected to emphasize the divine law to save as well as to earn. Nor could I do otherwise than frankly take to

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myself the blame for any ill that had come to his lifework through faults that a judicious and well-balanced business man would be prompt to recognize.

IV

THE DUTCH OVEN DISTRICT

NEXT morning, I saw that the distant sea had in the frosty night robed all the world with ice; and in this monotonous and slow moving Moderation, it was the same cloud, and more and more freezing mist, for three days. Then when the sun came out, I took Elder Weeks's place upon the quarter deck of his pung to carry his children to what the Yankee folk call a "knowledge box," shaped like a Dutch Oven. The fiery beast I drove was appropriately named the Tortoise.

His reverence, Peter, having plied his study tools for four hours before seven o'clock, was now numbered with the children, to ballast the pung, and to give an occasional twist to the Tortoise's tail. This youthful clergyman still had a good deal of

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the old boy in him, and looked, for all the world, much as he used to, when I saw him at twelve leading the life of a grey squirrel, perching on bowlders in the woods, nibbling nuts, or climbing the beeches and oaks of Cape Anne.

The Dutch Oven stood at Hollyhock Dam; a high and dry region far from a stream, but deriving its name from very numerous and highly respectable families named Dam, who resided in the district. It was sometimes called the Dam school house; and the boys sometimes lengthened the adjective, and spelled it incorrectly, and the minister carefully avoided the phrase in giving out notices—especially after being rebuked for it once or twice. Little Kitty Weeks was in a chronic state of rebellion and tears, during our prolonged passage over the first rod of our road, crying as though her heart would break,—“I don’t want to go to the old Dam school house.” And she did not get reconciled till Peter told her a long doll story while we were making our second rod.

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The weather underwent a good deal of modification, as we slowly passed through a corner of Moderation; and long before we reached the knowledge box, the glory of the sun upon the ice-clad globe attracted the eyes even of Kitty, who wondered at the bits of rainbows she saw everywhere in the plumed tree tops and in the reeds of the meadows. We entered keenly into the glee of the children; and even Tortoise raised his feet slowly, and put them down cautiously, as though he hesitated to drop his prosaic hoofs into the crystal roadway lest he break something. If I'd been driving a pung-load of snow birds to school, I could not have had a more cheery company. The little folks had their hands and mouths full of glittering diamonds snatched from the alders and the maples.

I really forgot the existence of Tortoise as a living entity, and became engrossed in tracing the lacework of the tall weeds, and the frosty fringes which glorified the under side of the fence rails. Peter gathered the

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seed cases of wild roses, whose red was intensified by the refraction of the icy wrapping. And the Tortoise became interested in various stumps encrusted in glass. And the children ceased their play, to "Look," "Look," at the fine forms of silver trees rising between their eyes and the low-lying sun.

"If that be the way you are driving, you'll meet much bare ground," I heard a decided but genial voice saying. And Elder Weeks stepped on the pung and took the reins. He had become very uneasy at trusting his precious cargo of children to my driving; and he had slowly followed us on foot. "In one respect, my brother, your friend Peter and I feel like the apostle Paul,—we live a leetle off the railroad; and feel the need of learning to drive a horse."

I now heard the echoing axe of the school-boys; and little Job Weeks jumped off, and ran ahead, jingling a bell, to let the boys know we were coming. And soon I saw the silver clapboards of the Dutch Oven touched by the rays of morning.

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"The neighbors here," said Peter, "are so much interested in keeping up their school, that they put a tax upon the *aurora borealis* last winter, which was so bright as to save candles. This, with the dog-tax, has pieced out our school appropriation by six weeks."

"I ollers look," chimed in Elder Weeks, "on them shakin' shiftin' streamers of the north with veneration. Every shake helps on eddication."

We now descried Cris Paige, the long legged teacher, chasing his truants of the day before, with a whip:—"What! can't I raise a trot on you, Jim?" But Jim sulked, and walked with dogged moderation,—preferring the lash to running from a man he disliked. And Cris could not raise a trot on that boy, though he tried ever so hard. Still, the snapper only cracked, without touching the boy. It was a way Mr. Paige had.

Peter went into the school room to pray for the Wigginses and the Blakes and the Dams and the Cooks and a Pache family, the five households that comprise this "dees-

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trict," and furnish eighty-five scholars. I, however, sat on one of the glass stumps outside. When Peter came out, we entered the woods hard by and made a day of it; lunching at a bark table with the old man Pache, who was known as Alf, or Peanut.

There were no houses in the Dam neighborhood save the five; and they were many roods apart, on partly cleared farms of four hundred acres each. There were spruces and balsams, hemlocks and pines, by the square mile; and they stood well together, an endless series of ice grottoes and palaces, irradiated here and there by rays of sunlight. We kept to the thinnest parts of the wood, and found occasional ledgy areas of sparse growth where the warm winter sun and bare rocks made it easy for us to pause, and where we could preach to each other somewhat more connectedly than we could when dodging under the drooping fir trees in a thick tangle.

I hardly know how we began, but I had felt chagrined enough to see my pet Nephew,

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as I called him, making himself at home in a neighborhood that I, in my pride, deemed unfit for him,—that area of ten miles square, through which I found him dragging at the heels of his Frying Pan or Elder Sam's Tortoise. His parish was bigger than the District of Columbia, and almost as large as Rhode Island, but there were scarcely more people in it than might be found at a summer clambake any fair day at Narragansett. All through this area, save at the "Corners" and "Pockets," the houses were half a mile or a mile apart, unless still more widely separated by a granite knob, or rocky, boggy woods fit only for the hunter and the wood-chopper.

"Do tell me, Peter, what you find to do in this parish?"

"It is here I seek to move the globe. The 'H' is the very spot where Archimedes desired to locate. It was here that Elder John Buzzell kept the world for two generations running full chisel. The Ism he founded gave the name Moderation to this town, be-

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cause they said he would have done more if he had not been so squat for time; and that what he did do was, in fact, very moderate when compared with what he could have done if he had felt called on to put forth all his latent energies."

"John Buzzell, who was he?"

"He was to his Ism what John Calvin, John Knox, John Wesley, John Robinson, and various other Johns were to their Isms. He was one of the great powers of this world. It will never do for you to sneeze at the size of this parish,—the 'H,' 'Moderation,' 'Hollyhock,' and the 'Dutch Oven' district. It was here that John Archimedes planted his lever. He was the pastor during sixty years; gathering a church of three hundred from the scattered farms over an area forty miles in diameter; planting here the news-press of what became a vigorous denomination in America; and here planting a seminary, which, transplanted, has grown into one of the most respectable of our New England denominational colleges. It was

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here that he rode from farm to farm,—‘I came to tell you that I love you;’ and he bore the message of love divine. At every door he uttered, ‘Peace be to this house.’”

“He must be the peaceful man,” I replied, “whom Elder Weeks told me of; who, as he said, would strip off his coat and whip the devil in a bout of two hours; who would holler, stamp, and get mad at it, and bang and rave. I don’t doubt he’d draw, even at the ‘H.’ His goings forth must have been a kind of Salvation Army procession of one.”

“Elder Sam Weeks,” added Peter, “was one who joined that procession. He once tackled with a fence stake two rowdies on a Sunday, who undertook to stop his journey to preach. ‘I have a message from God,’ he told them, ‘to be delivered at Simon Cooke’s in Hollyhock, and if you don’t get out the way I’ll split your heads.’ He came into this region when he was eighteen years old; having footed it over the Green Mountains and the White Hills. He took care of

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Elder Buzzell's horses, including the saw-horse; and he split tough knots of theology with the Elder. One day they gathered up the hosts of Zion, and went pouring over the hill tops to flood Chocorua Pocket,—where there was no Sunday, nothing but the flop of the pickerel and the snap of the gun. The last Sunday of their grand convocation, Buzzell was to preach, but he said,—‘Brethren, I have not the word to-day; and any one else may speak.’ And when Weeks, who sat on the pulpit stairs, arose, the depths of the Pocket were turned bottom side out. The hall windows were removed, and platforms were extemporized to bring people within sound of the word, which came with such power that a hundred men turned into new paths of life, and the whole community was revolutionized; and the fruits abide to this day, as I can testify. And what is wanted at this very hour, in this sparsely settled region, is the importation of men with a message. I could tell you ludicrous local stories by the

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hour, what you would call caricatures of a religious life; but as to downright solid and successful work, unique, and thoroughly adapted to the people of this country, there has been a vast deal of it. And there is need of more; and that's what I am trying to do in this parish."

Just then we emerged from the forest,—crossing a corner of the hospitable heights of the Okeehumkee range, whence we saw the White Mountains gleaming afar in brilliant sun; and then we plunged again into the icy woodlands. We must have traveled far and wide that day, leaving the Oven and the Tortoise far behind.

The heat of noonday prepared the polished steel of forest spires to fall under the breeze which arose later in the day. A gentle wind current sufficed to snap the antler-like limbs of the oaks; and the spangled fields, and the flowers of ice were rudely handled by the fingers of the sun. And when the wind put forth in glee a hundred hands, then the crackling ice, a musketry of the woods, was

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varied by discharges of great guns, as now and then a heavy limb fell from some great elm or maple.

To the pageant of morning frost, and to the noonday fire, and to the evening wind that stiffened almost to a gale, I gave less heed than to the beautiful, and the heated, and the more or less windy remarks made by Peter in defence of his living in this great bear camp which he called home. Even if I listened with both ears, I was not convinced that he was better situated for the world's work than I, whose home was not near or far from the exact center of Christian civilization on this globe.

"You are indeed a queer child, Peter, whose Day-Dream is always the idealization of to-day's situation, whatever it happens to be. I am glad you are content where I should find life insufferable."

"But no, my Dream to-day is what it always was. I have no taste for being a school master at the Dutch Oven or elsewhere. But I have a taste for having to do with hard

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things that ought to be done, and for which it is hard to find helpers. And if the Lord's Hard Scrabble needs a minister, I'll take my turn at it. Either the Saviour of men was mistaken in regard to the value of the human soul, or else I have work enough to do here and now. And woe is me if I have a Dream of Youth or Age essentially different from doing present duty whatever it is."

"Have you then no duty to yourself? Can you make the most of yourself upon this spot?"

"If that be the question, this then is the Dream of my Youth: to make the most of myself in solitude as well as in society; at least a fair share of life in relative solitude. These crowded pines kill each other; and the fittest, which survive, look all alike. They lack individuality. I would differentiate my life by separation."

"You must know then, O Nephew wise, that the unique men of the world are city born and bred; beings of such virility as to make elbow room for themselves, who find

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the profoundest solitude in that most desolate of deserts, a dense population. Did not Socrates cling to the city? And—to name another man of singular eminence—I myself find that the din of the city puts life into me; and its hoarse, grating sounds are music. I become tired of the roar of the sea, and long to hear the rattling of milk carts over the pavements in the small hours; and my soul pants to hear shrill voices scolding dirty children at six in the morning. If I would be a hermit, I would be homeless amid unmeasured leagues of houses. If I would be a student, I would study, as if a book, the contrasted types of men in great mercantile centers. If I would arouse every faculty of life, I would feel the great excitements of the town, and be in touch with the vast energies of metropolitan life. For my part, I think Elder Buzzell in a puttering business. The same amount of executive force put into a city would have shaken half a continent, instead of leaving the echoes to die in these interminable woodlands of a wild country, that

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can be most fittingly peopled by the return of roaming tribes of savages."

"But as for me," quoth my waif of old from out the sea, "as for me I was born with a strong appetite for country life, and I am always greedy for some great solitude of sea or land. I should wither in a city as soon as a blossom on a florist's counter. A city is to me nothing else than a union depot, with convenient freight and passenger rooms, great bookstands and bazaar stalls. My Youthful Dream, my paradise of work, never contemplated the service of tables, the laborious work of a secretary in an office, the dignified administration of complicated affairs that cheat my private hours. I detest all kinds of religious mill-work. To make the most of myself, I need the personal freedom of a country cure. I hunger for it. Nor would I willingly toil for an hour in any city so large that I could not spend the night in some natural solitude hard by. The Lord has made all manner of creatures, and some to live in a city; as he has also made sala-

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manders to delight in fire. I do not come down, but come up, in realizing my life's Dreams, when I live here and there at country cross-roads."

It was the dark of the moon, and as dark as Egypt's long entry before we reached home. The great cloud bank in the southwest had over-spread the sky, and the chill breath of a brewing north-easter began to strike us through before our leisurely homeward way was completely wended.

V

FALLING FLAKES

IT snowed three days, and Peter bolted his study door, even against his old Uncle; and his idling relative helped educate a houseful of children,—the school being out for one of the funerals which providence now and then vouchsafed to the Moderation schools for vacation purposes. If the ordinary providence came short, Cris Paige, in a healthy season, used to import funerals from other towns.

Then, too, besides playing school with the jolly infants, I found Elder Sam Weeks at least a three-days' study; a man of such force that it was easy to fancy tornadoes asleep in his breast.

If he had sometimes a touch of temper about him upon the farm, or in rough-clad business, there was always a change on the

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doorstep, and he brought only sunshine into the house. Mayflower, his oldest daughter, told me that she never heard her father and mother say anything to each other, which they might not suitably have said before others.

When he was not itinerating and preaching, or farming, the Elder made shoes. And Kezar, his oldest son, related to me the impression made upon his mind in childhood by the knowledge that the shoe shop was his father's prayer closet; and he pointed out to me with pride the door to a dark closet in the front hall which had been, ever since he could remember, the place where his mother went to pray.

It seemed odd enough to me, but on Saturday nights the faces of the looking-glasses in Elder Weeks's side of the house were turned to the wall, and all books put away except the Bible and hymn book and catechism; and the children were gathered about the open fire for Bible study, and the singing of devout hymns. The Goodwife Sebilla

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held a children's song and story service Sunday afternoons. So at the "H" the quiet kingdom of love made great conquests, and in this hidden valley important parts in life were acting.

This same Sebilla St. Clair Weeks was a daring horse-woman, so that Peter's Flyer was the delight of her life.

"Billa almost lost me, when I went courting," said the Elder. "I was chased by wolves; but I ran as fast as I could kite it, and clum' a tree. There came on a dry rain before morning, and I was damp. But when I got home I rigged up a bell attachment to an iron clasp; so that the next night when a wolf took the bait, he ran away with the clasp and the bell. Then all the wolves fled the country, racing like a Ramshackle."

Just then, I heard a bell,—jog-trotting by no means so swiftly as a wolf. The girls said that a peculiar gaited white horse, with mystic sleigh bells, filled the country-side, in all the echoing chambers of the hills, with an unending song:

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"Déa-con John,
Déa-con John,
Déa-con John Hár-ker."

When the genial deacon came in, he wanted me to go over to the Hopper and preach. Sally Bill had told him that there was an extra pair of stockings hanging out in the minister's wash last Monday, and she thought he must have company, and maybe I'd go and preach; which of course I did before I left the "H," taking my stockings to tea at Sally Bill's, who lives on the south rim of the Hopper.

"It 'pears to me, Elder Weeks," said the deacon, just as he began agitating those magic sleigh bells by taking up the reins, "that we have a surprisin' amount of climate here to the acre. But I remember, when I was a boy, that I worked at East Moderation eighteen days in succession in breaking out roads; and for five Sundays we hadn't any meeting."

The next morning at the "H," the air was so full of falling flakes that I could not see

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fifteen feet away. The Elder tied his trouser legs over his boots, and waded waist deep through the shallows, or, recumbent, rolled himself over the drift-crests to get to the barn,—being guided by an occasional tip of a fence post. I went out for a little exercise, and spent two hours in perambulating about a quarter of a mile.

“Young man,” said Elder Weeks, my senior, “I tell you that if you don’t take some fun out of life as you go along, you never’ll have any.”

The relentless gelid wind, the next morning, too, was whirling the snow in feathery clouds, like masses of ocean spray in a storm, and the world was so blockaded by nature that men were shut up, like field mice in their winter nests.

“We should have got on well enough, if it hadn’t been for the moon,” remarked Elder Weeks. “She up an’ apogeed right in the middle of it; an’ she made it ever so much worse.”

Meantime Peter worked like a storm-fiend

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in his study, with an iron clamp to keep fast the door,—a mechanical aid to solitude of spirit.

Upon this subject Peter was never quite sane; he was possessed, as by a madness, with the notion that mental growth and advancing power ought to be as marked during each decade of life as in the change from childhood to youth, or youth to manhood.

“You have achieved your position in life,” said I—throwing an extra pitch knot into Peter’s Cherub to hinder her from smoking so much,—“what is the use, then, of your tearing the heart out of more books? It is this perpetual keeping up steam, a concentration of forces at high pressure, that wears away your health, shortening your days to no purpose. What you are making such a touse about, like a school-boy at a task, I don’t understand.”

“If indeed, Uncle, I am a cranky man, this is the way the crank turns. My nature turns to certain magnetic studies, nor can I direct life’s needle otherwise. I cannot shake

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the rigid grasp of this constitution bias, I am held to service as a plant to growth. I have no proof of divine indwelling unless my life is on-going; unless I have a constantly renewed sense of the elasticity of youth, a life ever expanding, reaching toward limitless horizons. It is my business to study, all else is but amusement; as Casanova once said that Rubens was a painter, who amused himself with embassies. Hollyhock and Moderation divert me, frontier service diverts me, but it is the Dream of my Youth to study. I wake, only to dream of performing the labors of Hercules by first bolting my door."

"That's all nonsense, Peter. Have you not achieved as much as you are likely to, in reputation and influence? Why not lengthen your days, and take life easy?"

"That is not the way I look at it. With me the unending life—eternity—has now begun. I think little about the next ten years, but much concerning the next ten thousand. In respect to this world, while I am on it, I am determined to find out all I can about it

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before leaving it forever. I should be ashamed to meet an inquisitorial angel in the streets of the New Jerusalem, and have to stand a kind of civil service examination relating to the Lord's footstool, knowing as little as I do about it. I should, indeed, like to use a little history and natural science and psychology over here at the Dam school house, but my main use for it all is somewhere else. You ask, why do I read this now, and who will get any good from it? I answer that I am the man to get good from it. I have an uncontrollable appetite for books. Upon these stormy days, I look beyond the drifts, and see the vast panorama of the ages of human history; I dig below the winter to the earth's deep fires; I fly this world and know the stars. And I can scarcely sleep for my emulation of that wren in the fable, which became the king of birds, by mounting the skies upon the back of an eagle; which, when the eagle fell exhausted, soared to even greater height. I will for myself mount as far toward the heavens as

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any other man can carry me; and, thence, fly higher,—although I know that without him I could never reach that height where he ceases to ascend. Instinctively I know what course to follow, and I am like a bird resting all night on a ship's mast far at sea; I clearly discern in the morning, without landmark, the direction to take, needing no pilot. So I voyage toward other realms."

"I stand corrected, my child, by your delightful homily; and I doubt not that you need to study. Men mis-read, mis-remember,—and then they distort the truth by disarranging the facts; and so, under the guise of studying a few years they really invent outright from their own heads certain theologies and sciences and histories and label them as antique, and then quote, in proof, their voluminous reading of badly made books."

Saying this, I took a volume from the table. "This author spent eight years in the Bodleian library; yet in all that time she did not get hold of the right reading. Certain

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facts are cited here, and others left out that should have made this book more wholesome and truthful.

“ Unless you yourself keep at it, as you say, for ten thousand years, you may not get anything square. Yet for me the cubical sides of the truth are square enough now,— at least they’ll do so long as I live on Cape Anne.”

VI

THE HIBERNACLE

NOTWITHSTANDING all our quarrel, Peter was a good fellow, and got down from his high stilts and put on snow shoes. And at my extreme age, I was glad of my early practice in snow-shoeing. When therefore the weather cleared up we sallied forth to build a Hibernacle on the southern slope of Mount Rheumatiz.

Peter did not take his studies very seriously after all. He only sought to average a certain number of hours of intellectual activity, for every day, of every week, of every month, of every year of his mortal existence; and, so long as he did that, he was willing to play bear the rest of the time. So off we went, pulling our luggage after us on a sledge.

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Since Christian congregations do not gather on snow shoes, even at Moderation Corner or Hollyhock Square, I found that Parson Peter could as well as not take a fortnight's vacation for hibernating. In this region, in fact, there is little church-going in midwinter. A new snow of six inches, and a light air stirring, will drift full the deep cuts that the road breakers may have made through the heavy accumulations of earlier snows; thus the farmer is blockaded by each new storm, even if it be a light one. After the first of January, there is never good sleighing on this highland. The agricultural lords then stick to their castles for three months, save as they sally forth in gangs to attack the roads. There may be chopping, but no hauling, and the occasional adventure of going to the Corner or the Square is all that may be looked for. And very well reputed spring and fall church goers, I've heard swear like mediæval kings, when engineering a string of twelve yoke of oxen in road-breaking. Indeed, the scions of antique

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royalty riding in their war chariots were never so grand as our Yankee yeomen, yelling at their teams and teamsters from off a breaking-out sled. If, now and then, they piously go to meeting in the late winter, they are considered candidates for a diaconate; or, if secular candidates, they attend two or three Sundays before town meeting.

“My people,” said Peter after the storm, “will now hibernate; and we ourselves may as well be off on a midwinter lark.”

Forth we went into the new world of the snow. The early part of the storm had been so damp that the driving flakes adhered to the sides of house and barn, which made a base later on for the drier snow to cling to, so that the buildings were hoary. And all about the “H,” the green world was destroyed and there was a new creation in white, the fir trees and the low pines being like towers of snow. I hesitated at first to desecrate the untarnished surface of the new earth under the new heavens by stepping on it; particularly since I was somewhat out of

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use in treading snow shoes, and floundered not a little at first amid the luminous drifts.

The fury of the gale had heaped the snow in the lee of everything that stood against it. Dimpling and curving drifts extended like rolls of cotton, folding along the stone walls, which were seen but here and there between the billowing hills of snow. Escaping the ten or fifteen feet mounds in the door yard, we explored the graceful peaks and ridges of twenty or thirty feet drift; onward surging, like seamen amid mountain waves, whose crests glistened under the kindling fires of the sun. We had an early start, but long before we reached Farmer Tompkins's house, we were moving in a dazzling desert of snow; the new heavens blazing with light, and the new earth reflecting it.

In our approach to the mountain, we were sheltered, from what drifting air there was, by the lee of the rugged Rheumatiz and by the shaggy forests. In this nook it was so warm that a bird song would have been quite summer like.

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“List,” cried Peter.

And sure enough we heard music. It was the Moderation Milking Song. The drifts, which we were walking over, had buried Farmer Tompkins’s garden and outbuildings, and we noticed now the lowly roof of the barn and the chimney of his house from the snow. His boys, like moles in the snow, had evidently tunneled from the house to the barn sheds; and Ariel was there now, singing that most pathetic ballad:

“Once I was happy,
But look at me naow —
Down in the barn yard
Milking a caow.”

The happy time the melancholy songster alluded to, must have been when at daybreak he had climbed up through the paternal chimney to take an observation. Before tunneling through to the prosaic barn business, ’Riel and Jim had scampered about the drifts near the chimney, erecting shingle signs, chalk marked: “Keep off the grass,”

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“Pic-nic on the Common to-night,” “Open air meeting in the grove at 3 o’clock.”

Peter now approached the chimney to make a pastoral “call.” “Good morning, Aunt Nabby,” he shouted. “How do you all do to-day?”

“Ya-as. We are enjoying poor health,” answered Uncle ’Bial; “but Nabby, she’s got a bad rheumatiz.”

“No, I haint, pa,” we heard old Nabby say in a loud, squeaky voice. “No, I haint. They are not troubling me much now; but in the fall I had ’em bad.”

After some further pastoral halloos down the flue, the shepherd moved on. Mount Rheumatiz is not more than sixteen hundred feet above the sea, the base itself two-thirds that height. Into an oblong open space in the woods we picked our way; a grown-up pasture, too ledgy for many trees. Here, for the most part, the snow was at a level; there being not far from six feet,—with shallows so thin as three, through which were peeping the tips of the ground juniper

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or of scrubby pitch pine. An immense hemlock upon the north of this opening, had limbs so long and stiff, and upper foliage so heavy, that there was little snow under it; the extremities of the long bending boughs being so weighted as to fall low, and keep out from the interior most of the wandering wind currents, which had not left quite free this little oasis in the woodland. Indeed we observed that near certain isolated pines of forty feet high, which were standing from five to fifteen feet apart in the open, there had been such eddying in the snow-fall as to leave small areas of so little depth that here and there a head of hardhack could be seen, or a hardy handful of stiff grasses.

But our attempt to gaze within the forest was barred by a maze of white branches crossing each other, as if the arms upheld great fragments of snow drift. Flakes of wool falling over the wood could not have more effectually screened the interior recesses. By peering curiously this way and

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that, and jarring the snow from certain limbs, I could see the white hangings as if between halls, dense curtains woven by crossing limbs of snow. I am sure that every one of these fir trees will in summer well remember the weight of long ago winters, and bend all its branches still toward the earth, like an aged man accustomed to bearing burdens of sorrow.

In some respects the great hemlock, which we had selected for our Hibernacle, was not unlike a woodland house wrapped in snow, the long snowy limbs from above so drooping as to appear like a circular roof and the walls of a room. And this was banked about outside by level snow of great depth, or by drifts which prevented disagreeable air drafts from entering the tree chamber within. We took away some of the limbs to the south for door and window purposes; through which the noonday sun came like a fire, taking off the chill from the interior. This particular tree Peter had visited at some

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former period of his existence, and he had given to it the name,—Poverty Tree; nor did he deign to tell me why.

I searched the vicinity at once to learn whether any of our neighbors were at home; and soon found the broad tracks of partridge snow-shoes, and the fleecy paths which the rabbits had already opened. And there were prints of other wild and unknown feet upon the snow. Under one of the white pines I found a thick-set bunch of sheep laurel, and one stock of sweet fern, and a small mat of dry pine needles; through which the green checkerberry plants were rising and looking out upon the winter. There was a stone wall not far away, along which were many depressions in the surface, and I could hear musical waters tinkling along under two feet of frozen snow and ice,—varying the liquid tune by high notes at some fall in the bed of the brook.

After our early rising and hard walk, we both lay down and went to sleep in a twinkling, first burying ourselves in the dry snow, like

partridges. It was indeed our serious purpose to sleep through the remainder of the winter, and we were much chagrined to wake up in ten minutes; unless, indeed, it was ten minutes after, on the next day, but of this we could never be certain. I only know that in our hibernating we lost a day somewhere.

On waking, I looked for that ancient emblem of faith, a dry juniper with heart still sound; and while I plied the axe, Peter gathered a few pine cones and seasoned twigs, and had the good luck to procure half a dozen bleached leaves of the beech, and soon we had a small fire rising against a squared face of the out-cropping ledge under our hemlock; and the smoke curled high among the branches. Then Peter cut a few blocks of mosquito wood out of an old log, one end of which emerged from the snow bank; and he thawed out the insects, while I was making thunder cake for dinner. So that for our noonday meal we had all the buzz and stir and delightful music of the summer woods.

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Healthy appetites awaited all our company, both the resuscitated mosquitoes and the hibernating parsons. We were as hungry as the wild creatures which prowl about these wintry hills by night. What was left of my cooking was, however, religiously burned, lest it kill the foxes. Peter named it "thunder" cake, because in Yankee idiom it tasted like it. It was so economical that we did not want any supper.

Our mountain oasis slanted toward the south, so that we upon the upper side could look over the lower side tree-tops, far away to the bare and immaculate hills of the Brier neighborhood. And in the hollows below us we looked upon the sunlighted tops of towers of snow and fir. No scenery could be more spirited than our outlook near or far. And it added not a little to the exhilaration of the afternoon that the wind so shifted as to invade our precinct and shake the snow plumes of the pines; and later it so increased as to rattle the branches of the oaks, and chafe the limbs of the beeches. The most

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heavily laden of the young maples were quite broken down, and the snow-burdened upper limbs of the white pines were snapped like pipe stems. The wracking wind, however, soon moved to a new point,—in an attempt to box the compass; yet all was quiet in our corner, sheltered as we were by spurs of the mountain upon either side. We could see, as long as we could see anything clearly, the dry snow flying like spray along the ridges far below us, the blinding dance of flakes unwilling to sleep.

It was little work to interweave the foliage and thicken the night shelter by pleaching the cuttings of juniper; and we pillowed our heads on twigs of pine. My eyelids, weary of winking, now closed in slumber.

VII

MORNING EVERYWHERE

ALL along the edge of the forest, the morning beams were shooting under the branches; and my opening eyes looked to the south-east over our world of snow,—as much ours as if we had slept a-top of the northern pole.

“This,” I said, finally, between sleeping and waking, with a yawn at every punctuation point, “This was my childhood Dream, to come into such relation to frost and fire, to earth and sky, that my life might harmonize with the natural forces, like one standing in the eye of the sun, or like those creatures which in midwinter bask in summer solitudes.”

Then I ceased yawning, and began to stretch myself; and I went on to remark:

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"Plato derived his name from the breadth of his chest, and the breadth of his forehead; and I am platonized by this hibernation. Exhilarating ideas already flow in upon me. I take to life with new zest in this wintry air. This morning I could flood the world with sunshine, if I were a poet."

The bloom of the morning, we spent in conversational quest of the awakening, stimulating forces, by which to arouse the mind to its highest activity.

"With the student, this is what life is for," I said. "How is it then, my young old man of forty, that you regulate the dawn of mental daylight? Is there any method of kindling betimes the soul's fires, morning by morning?"

"That conundrum," replied Forty, "is easily answered. The secret is good health and freedom from evening engagements. Press this button, and nature does the rest. The morning hours are filled with music, the soul's drumbeat. The brain is fresh from the night's repair shop; and it must work

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now or never. The morning is solitude; be it city or country. It is then that the fountain of light is flowing."

"You are talking sheer nonsense, Peter. Schiller wrote in the night, till three or four in the morning, and then went to bed like a sensible man; it is absurd to reverse it, and begin by rising at three or four as you do. That too, was when the poet was in a little house of one room upon the top of a ridge near Jena, commanding a fine view, as we have now,—fir-clad mountains and beautiful valleys. He could see it all in his night studies. It was a purely mechanical shift for securing solitude of spirit. The night was imaginative in that lonely spot. So too, I was awake for hours last night, to dream of snow-drift sledging on the polar sea. When nature locks her door of snow behind me, I am as much alone, as if I were the only man on the globe. This device of the Hibernacle suits me admirably. Is not our retirement as perfect now as if we were sitting on the snowy pole of Mars? I am at this moment

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convinced that the convenient solitudes of your country parish can easily transport a man beyond himself, as if his life were in direct contact with celestial inspiration. No man on this globe can win a great following who is not much alone."

"Although you ramble, Uncle, somewhere between first and last, what you say is good. Yet I am convinced that we are both wrong. The world's work is done by dray-horse power, not by spurt and spirit. I have great respect for Arthur's knight, Gawain, who had double strength from nine to twelve, and from three to six. Our most efficient brain workers do as the farmers do,—begin as they can hold out, and keep at it. This Hibernacle business is a fraud, fit only for quixotic creatures who study like fury three days, and then do nothing for a week, or who commonly wake by night and sleep by day. If the farmers, mechanics, and merchants of the world, and the house-keepers, were to work that fashion,—society would collapse."

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“Wise, my child; let us then qualify our words, and say that the leaders of thought are those tough fellows, who are physically a match for metropolitan work; who have, by heredity, amazing force. From a stock of cave dwellers and sea pirates, of pioneers who subdue a continent, come forth a few knurly men, whose intellects have a good physical basis; and they have double strength by observing the ordinary working daylight hours like common folks. But you and I, let us say, were not made on that plan, and we must look out for ourselves. We do not, we will say, deal directly with men in the mass, but live in sparse districts, and it is therefore our main business to produce the raw material of thought for the world’s workers. This, O Nephew beloved, we may be physically equal to, when we should break down by the strain of the city or even the rough and tumble of our border life. But here in country solitudes we can furnish seed for growing continents. Allied as we are to

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Nature, we deal in what is about to be; teeming with projects and powers forever unfolding."

"It is true, O Uncle, so thoughtful just now, that our country homes are favorable for study; isolated as they are, and not easily crowded,—recalling to mind the singular adaptation of certain mountain peaks for telescopic search. Only, one needs the painstaking and patient content of an astronomic observer; else, he will lose the opportunity given him."

"Still, Peter, to speak somewhat more frankly, I should go to sleep and stay so, were I so far removed from mercantile centers. And you would, but for your stimulating books. Bright essays, the world's best literature, the biographies of vigorous men, must, so far as they may, take the place of contact with life and of conversation with your peers. Letter writing is a lost art, and the railway has killed the old style visitations between kindred souls in the country. Now

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you must often voyage to other coasts, and have great libraries put in their arousing forces, or you will hibernate forever."

"But is it not better, O wise metropolitan, that my work have no must or mould, no bookish smell? Is it not better that my artistic work bloom like the flowers and the snow crystals? In the country, I seek to catch and imprison in my writing the odor of the forests, the salt of the sea, and the vigor of the north wind. A great library is useful for certain lines of authorship, but the country town has its compensations."

"For example," I said, "when the inspiring winds of heaven blow through small minds, merely suggesting the inspiration of a literary crack or key-hole."

"But, Uncle, you know that the world's prophets were never bookworms. Does not he drink at an empty bucket, who carries into the library no independent power of thinking? Unless a man has grip and pluck to shake a book to pieces, and know what it is made of, he is less than a dog in literary

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pursuits. Is not more time wasted in reading than in any other way? To think through one good book is worth more than to turn a million pages. The world's great need to-day is for individual thinking; there is a steady demand for it, as for cotton goods. This Hibernacle is a fit place for carrying on this kind of business. The mighty original thinkers of the world are country born and bred; and if they happen to live in a city, they carry the country solitude with them, and live in it betimes."

"But, Peter, you will never to all eternity get back the hours for study you have lost in serving tables for the church: you've lost the run of your books; you are short on reading; your perished years are crying to you now."

"That is not so. The mind loves variety of culture and achievement; to lie fallow as well as to produce. The energies of the sun vitalize an idle soil long outworn."

"Rather change the figure from dry to wet. And say that the currents of secular business,

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which have poured over your mind and saturated it during some years, have enriched it with new elements; as irrigating streams in the New West fertilize city lawns and country wheat fields, by certain subtile properties which leach out from the varied soils of far-off hillsides."

"Books or no books," my Nephew asserted, "unless life's discipline answers well for those who live remote from libraries or who cannot use them, we must despair of the human race. It is certainly true that mental power however helped by books, is an independent growth, indigenous to country or city,—else perish the world. And this country solitude is favorable, I contend, for the upspringing of original intellectual force. It is the country against the city every time. While the mind of the city is upon the present market, the independent countryman is of a piece with *natura*, bent upon knowing that which is about to be, as if he himself at his best were about to be born."

"This, I admit, my gentle Peter; that is,

for a time but not forever. Solitude is a good school during a term of years, like a college; but it is soon outgrown: it is only useful in forming a mental habit. Socrates could stand in one position all day, hiding himself in the folds of an ordinary garment, but the most of his time he mingled with men. Antoninus retired into himself, and for the hour forgot his empire. Mahomet saw visions in a cave before he thought of clashing arms. Chrysostom, of golden mouth, spent six years in the desert, after he had deserted the law, before he entered his ministry. But if I had to be forever alone, I should quickly degenerate into an artificial use of solitude to kill time, as the sage Domitian spent his solitude in tackling flies with a bodkin. Montaigne is wrong—to be forever alone rather than never alone. To be forever alone is to settle into the sand like a sphinx. As a mere student you will perish from off the earth, unless now and then, at least, you bolt for the city.”

“A poor doctrine, indeed, is that. With

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good air, and health, and morning hours, and solitude, I grow as a tree does. You would not pull up a tree every few minutes, and send it to town. I bring the teeming globe hither, and find here my world of chivalry. Here in Hollyhock are fair samples of all mankind. And the oaks and the waterfalls and the very snows of winter join me in vindicating the present nobility of the corner of the globe where I live. Unless I dignify my calling of to-day, the city would be wasted on me. Mere place is indifferent; as, too, all men are. Unless I am self-centered, and have life in myself as a vital seed of God, then woe is me in city or wilderness."

"To tell the truth, Peter, and to change the topic, I have had, on my part, solitude enough for one night and a day. Let us make a bee line for the 'H.'"

As soon as we could get news, through the storm-bound world, we learned that Hollyhock had been completely buried, and that Peter would be out of parochial work unless

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he should turn to and shovel. While he was digging out his people, I returned to Cape Anne, where there was less snow; going as soon as steam shoveling could open the road.

VIII

BALMY SPRING

IF the Old Man Peter had not been reasonably jolly, and delightful company, and if I'd not had a lingering affection for him, as really my only son—less by adoption than by my having given some years to mis-educating his early life,—I suppose that I should not have invaded his solitude again so soon as March or April. I only remember that the spring had set in with its usual severity at Manchester-by-the-Sea, but it was reported as still mid-winter in that highland district where the old gentleman Peter sat with dangling feet upon the cross-bar of the “H.”

I felt anxious to know the fate of Hollyhock. My travel thither was through a district still romantic from the surviving relics of primeval Yankeeland, it being a country

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where young women of twenty read Pilgrim's Progress on the railway, in an old edition with a leather cover. At the "H" I received a warm welcome, at least from Tortoise. Crack, bang, I heard him out of the darkness next morning. As the boy Bismarck fired a pistol in his room when he wanted to call the waiter, so Elder Weeks's horse had a habit of kicking against the side of his box-stall when hungry.

"I'm dreadfully tired," said the Petrine Mollie, at breakfast, in answer to my conventional inquiries.

"Tired of what?"

"Tired of minding my own business. I want to stir up things. I hope that you have brought along a Salvation Army with you, to march through Moderation."

"And I," quoth Helen, "am tired of counting the snow storms. We have had only twenty-eight so far. There must be, the Elder tells us, thirty snows to complete the winter. It is counted, if there's snow enough to track a cat. There will come at

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last the great robin storm, with snow so light that the birds can eat it up, or else so heavy as to kill them all, I don't know which, —then it will be spring."

"It is almost spring now," added the Queen mother, "for, yesterday, I saw a delicate mist curling along the southern slope of our roof."

Seven feet of snow on a level was all there was of it. And it did look "kinder springy," as Sebilla said.

Elder Weeks reported to me in detail the casualties of the winter storms,—the heroic efforts of the Ragged Hill road-breakers to make it possible for the physician to go upon his rounds, too late indeed to rescue the dying. And in the drifts of Hollyhock Square a woman had perished between the doors of neighbors. At Poverty Pond, Tom Hyland was burned out at three o'clock on the morning of the great snow, his family in their night garments gathering under a fir tree in the yard: yet his young children suffered no more than old salamanders,—

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having been oft in the fire, Tom being as careless of stovepipe connections and cracked flues as he was in handling a tobacco pipe.

Soon after our day-dawn breakfast, Peter and I started across the fields on the crust, to attend the Moderation town meeting. It was a coarse morning; and the glazed and stiffened snow-surface did not soften till ten o'clock. We took along a couple of fry-pans for sliding down the long hills, as we used to do in the Rocky mountains.

"Don't you think, Peter," I queried, "that the Beulahland business is overdone in these country towns? There are too many good people,—not wickedness enough for this world."

"No, that's your mistake. The hell of habit is just as deep here as it is in New York. It is safer to bring up boys in Boston than in Righteous Ossipee or at Butter-milk Hollow. A country store attracts loafers of the worst type. A careful mother sends an innocent child to the Corner, only to hear words unfit.

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“The grip of natural law is upon men in the country, as in the city; and the vile wax worse and worse. A handful of these scalawags in war times organized to resist the draft; and they undertook to fortify that hill on the left. Here are four towns in one tier, in any one of which you can carry an election, either way, for a hundred dollars. The proportion of unworthy citizens may not be so great as in a city, but it is bad enough. We live at constant risk of lapsing into barbarism. One generation of failure to inculcate moral principles would imperil our civilization.”

As we entered the town house door Zelah Smith of Picked Mountain was expounding his latest invention to a knot of neighbors. “Automatic, spiral spring, elliptic, triple-jointed, double-back-action wax figgers they are.”

I saw him, soon after, button-holing Captain Partiarach,—“George, I believe there are better men in hell, than some are who do business in this world. Take Lingum

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Vitey over there; his wickedness strikes through to Chiny."

Yet, when Uncle James Till, a member of the church, was dying by inches of a loathsome disease, and the saints neglected him, Peter turned to the quaint and interesting sinners; and found them to a man—so far at least as his discernment led him to test them—a kind-hearted set, always ready to bear a hand at a good turn. When the parson asked Mr. Stutson if he would go and watch that very night, Robert replied, "Well, Elder, Gowen Crowe and me are, as you might say, the worst fellows in town; but we will help take care of the sick. I'm kinder hard-hearted, but I don't want to see 'em suffer, you know."

Mr. Robert Stutson never went to meeting, not he; but he paid five dollars a year toward keeping the Old Man Peter in the neighborhood, because he thought him "an agreeable man to have round;" then, too, he believed at least in meeting-houses as helpful to real estate. He advertised his

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farm in the Brier Neighborhood as "near church"; referring really to an old tumble-down Methodist chapel that had not been occupied for forty years.

It is true, indeed, that the sinners here-away took to Peter. He was familiar with the prejudices that beset the common round of life; and he did not keep his elbows akimbo. His hearty good will conciliated even the cross-grained. And he appreciated so thoroughly the good qualities of the worst of men, and held in such withering scorn ignoble conduct, that they received kindly his adroit rebukes of their ill courses. Peter was warm-hearted, and he poured out a wealth of affection. I never knew him to undertake to wash his parishioners in scalding water.

Even Jack Brelles,—who told Peter that he did not think much of them ministers who "gradoowated at a cemetery," and who rejected the Bible because he had heard that it was written in another language and you couldn't know what it meant,—had some of

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his crooks taken out by his pastor's patient good humor. "Corn and coaxin'," quoth Jack to his minister, "is good in drivin' pigs; and besides, you must go slow."

After the town meeting adjourned, we made our way to Mr. Myles Blacke's in the east part of the town. We moved at the heels of a great horse named Tom at the rate of about four miles an hour, between walls of snow like alabaster, piled as high as his shoulders on either side,—there being from six to twelve inches leeway on either side of the sleigh. The weather had moderated somewhat, the sun being at our backs, and the wind drawing softly from the south-east. Cautiously we picked our way across the country, seeing, above the trench which we traveled in, an occasional outcropping of stone wall, or the discouraged tips of straggling birches and arctic alders. Once I detected the faint "Caw, Caw," of the celebrated March canary.

Tall and still temples of sunlighted pines, and noble outlines of great oaks and beeches,

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we could see in the white pastures. Up hill and down hill we went, skirting the forests, or plunging through a mile of thick woods; or we passed farm buildings at a distance. Afar stretched our sight over wind-swept areas of glistening snow, shaded and toned by slight mounds or hollows. And far, far, far away, our intelligent and thoughtful Tom got a glimpse of slightly rising ground in the road; and then, more and more slowly, he bent his steps,—as if inclined to pause and consider the varied aspects of the sunset scenery.

Finally, a little before the glow in the west fairly died out, we reached Mr. Blacke's little brown cottage, by an ice-bound brook whose tinkling music welcomed the gathering night. The eddying drifts had favored this stream, to which a path led from the barn. The outlines of a handsome maple filled the space between the path and the house. It is a short mile from any neighbor's, save the Cole house fifty rods up the hillside.

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Here settled Major Blacke after the Revolution, and Ensign Cole next door. Of course, the thrifty, self-reliant boys, and the handsome girls with three decker foreheads and no nonsense about them, intermarried. And here I found the youngest girl of the Coles, Sarah, and the youngest of the Blackes, Benjamin, and their children, three girls and two boys; save that the boys had gone into the unseen country through the smoke of battle,—and one of the girls had followed, after long service in the wards of a soldiers' hospital. Their three likenesses adorned, as if by a vision out of heaven, the plain walls of the best room; and, to all intents, as to a living influence upon their early home, these three still abode with their kinsfolk.

The two girls remaining were women with a career as we say, the one a youthful widowed mother of forty with stalwart sons just pushing away from home, and the other a well educated teacher of singular refinement giving up her high ambitions to care

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for the declining years of father and mother. Here among the snow drifts, with six months of winter and nine of cold weather, close under the bristling porcupine firs of Cedar Mountain, I found earthly character fit for the Celestial City,—a homely house radiant as if the walls were jasper. The door, indeed, hung on hinges of leather, and a hospitable thong lifted the latch; but there was neither bolt nor lock to keep the entrance, which was ready to open by day or night as if it were a gate of pearl.

Strange are the crops they raise in this wintry zone. One face has haunted me for years. I saw it next day, at the funeral service that called us thither. A tall, well-balanced figure opened the door at the house of the Coles,—how can I forget her dark hair, so abundant as not to be easily stowed away; her oval face and exquisitely cut features; her eyes deep and dreamy in that hour of strange sorrow, but kindling with lights like the sea upon some fitful morning of mingled cloud and sunshine. Amid the

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crowds of gentle homespun neighbors, with their intelligent faces betokening that they had lost a good friend, moved this woman, who would have given to Raphael, could he have seen her, a new ideal for a Madonna. How still she was, and of what tender grace, as she performed delicate offices for those who could not see for tears, and how reverently she retouched the garments of the saintly dead. Milton, whose creations are all masculine, never dreamed of such an angel as I saw here before me in flesh and blood, nurtured amid the snow drifts near Indian Water.

She had been, as I afterwards learned, in high and honored public station, for which she was eminently qualified; but every thought of worldly preferment, and even an honorable, and, as we say, desirable marriage, were set aside for the sake of daily ministration to an aged mother and invalid sister, in a home from which death had removed her brother and father.

Here I discovered the old-time secret of

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New England life and influence in the world. For some generations this stingy soil and rough weather have nurtured human life rare in its moral beauty, as the Alpine mountains blossom in the edelweiss.

IX

HOLLYHOCK SQUARE

THE next day there came a great snow-eater; a warm cloud settling and absorbing the snow, as if by a sponge. Half hidden in its mysterious folds, we floundered through the softening drifts toward Hollyhock Square; swooping down upon the unprotected metropolis, as became the descendants of sea-kings stealing forth when little suspected.

The main street was known as 'Tater Row, along which the entire male population was sitting on a wall at our arrival; the young ones nibbling at roast potatoes.

There were four houses. Two were ten or twelve feet square; and two, ten by sixteen.

There was one business block unoccupied, —a dilapidated farm house, forty by forty.

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It was adorned by signs nailed up by the rising generation :—" The Cave," " The House of Adam," " Grand Central Hotel, European Plan," " Theoretical Hair Cutting."

The great square or park was surrounded by a stump fence. And there was, near by, a lake with wintry stumps above the ice or snow, which was well stocked every spring with frogs and turtles.

I am told that from the summer days the glory has departed, and that the acres of hollyhocks, which once waved so triumphantly have given place to four or five sunflowers at the door of the " Cave." Yet, as nations revive when decay is upon them—sometimes showing a strange vitality,—so, even here, I saw that a new stock had come into the Square, giving a fresh lease of life to this important mercantile center. Straightway, upon the coming of the parson, the enterprising John Blower, who commonly disdained to work, arose and began dexterously to hack at some picturesque bushes in the middle of the road; and Stephen Boreman began

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to get ready to commence to undertake to nail certain old boards upon an old frame for a new house. So the Hollyhock masses were rising to the exigencies of the season, in preparing for spring business.

The feckless William Lumpkine still sat bareheaded upon the wall, his long white hair rising in fountain puffs over his forehead, his large features illumined by full eyes, which were set off by high arched and bushy brows, quite black. The unwashed and sun-burned bronze on his face I believe to have been based upon a fine ruddy hue relieved by white. He must have been a fine looking man in his youth. When Peter asked his highness about his progress in basket making, he replied,—“When there’s a great plenty, Elder, that’s willin’ and eager to help the poor, what makes you ask me to work so hard to earn the little you give me?”

“You pray to me for that little,” replied Peter; “why not pray to God?”

“I do not pray to anyone. There’s no direction better for me than my own. As

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for your God, I don't know where he is, or how to get at him if I would."

At this point Peter asked me to go into the old man's house to see his great invention: "He is the most useful man of this age." The invention proved to be a visitor's chair, designed for use in sick rooms. By a clock-work and spring attachment, the chair would rise up and tip the visitor out upon his feet at the end of three minutes or five, or of ten at farthest. I ordered a dozen at once, to lend in my old-time parish.

In my absence, Peter, I suppose, tried to straighten out brother Lumpkine's theological kinks; it being much to my nephew's credit that he was a physician, going forth to heal, rather than merely staying at home to keep a spiritual apothecary shop. And, like a physician, he did not gossip about his patients, so that I never knew anything else about my kinky brother Lumpkine.

I think that we went next to North Moderation; but I am all mixed up about them, and I have to control my speech with care when

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I think of all the kinds of Moderation I went to. The most I remember was the patent blind-fasteners in use at the meeting house, where Peter held a mid-week preaching service. They were of various forms and sizes. One blind-fastener was the slender trunk of a locust, four inches in diameter and ten feet long, with one end upon the ground and the other leaning at an angle of seventy degrees against the meeting-house blind to keep it from banging. Another was a board strip eight feet long; another a piece of worm-eaten and decayed rail six feet long and three to five inches wide. The ornamental fastenings of the house of the Lord produced a proper and solemnizing effect upon my mind, and prepared me for a thin meeting. There were two horses and two umbrellas.

"There ain't nobody here," said the sexton. "I'm mighty sorry it's such slumpy sloppy traveling. If it hadn't been for this, you'd had a slatter of 'em."

As I was to do the preaching, my attention was drawn to Nick Foxwell, who strode

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down the aisle, clad in a black slouch hat and short dark coat and trousers, striped with grey, his nether garments being tucked into high topped boots. He seated himself in a wall pew, in the second row from the front, and swung himself round with his back to the wall; then threw up his feet upon the seat, and drew his knees to a peak and clasped them with his long fingers,—then cocked up his eye at the minister. There he sat, his jet black hair flowing over a fine full forehead. A black beard and moustache, and his clean shaven cheeks, set off to advantage his roguish, sleepless, lynx-like eyes, which were fastened on me every moment. I tried my best to make my theology seem reasonable to him; and his moral sense, after a time, led him to take a more reverent attitude.

After service I climbed to the belfry with the Old Man Peter. “Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,” was the legend of the bell casting. It was after our discussion of the orthodoxy of this bell, that Peter announced his purpose to migrate. He had an

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incurable longing for the western horizon. And with re-established health he now proposed to make an exploration of that great empire of the future, the Pacific Northwest; to see whether there might be providential call for his removing thither the Queen and her subjects.

In returning to the "H," many points were debated, growing out of our recent adventures in rural New England. "What kind of a theology have you been preaching in that Dam school house, and to those stone-wall listeners?"

"For the most part, I do not debate dogmatics. I preach only angelic sermons. Nothing else is fit. Almost all the people in this part of the country who attend church are really angels. To be sure, you might come into this region, as a sensational reporter to find something to excite your risibilities; and I could, at short notice, unearth the queerest kind of stories of the quaintest people, and the most grotesque phases of life. If you and I were to do this,

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however, it would lead to a total misconception of the evolution of manhood hereabouts. The plain truth is that the saints in this paradise hammer out their own theology by observing devout hours at the fire-side. And scarcely anyone else than these beloved saints ever think of attending meeting-house services with any regularity."

"What precious pagans!"

"Not heathens. Those who do not attend church are, for the most part, level-headed, and many are well read; but they do not readily take to what you call personal religion. Reverence is their due, upon points of citizenship; but, by heredity, they belong to an unchristian stock. Since this country was first settled, there are certain families who have had relatively little conscience, and very little pitch toward things divine. They are intelligent animals, with undeveloped possibility of laying hold upon life unending."

"I should say so. Mrs. Lumpkin ventured a remark when I was complimenting her husband's sick-room invention. It was

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when she saw you through the window,—
'What a dreadful theology that man has got; I would rather have the smallpox than to take it.' "

"I'll warrant it. In the dearth of entertainments—the circus and the menagerie,—that woman will walk two miles to a school-house preaching service, or four miles to a first-class funeral; but she responds as little as a hen to the radiant hope of a personal immortality—lest there be a Day of Judgment to go with it. Heaven does not interest her one tithe so much as Hollyhock. And she has a family of fourteen children just like herself, except three. There's John and Sarah and Polly, who appear to have a smattering of moral sense, reciprocating slightly the spiritual affection of that part of the church which is fairly alive to personal Christian service. But Sam, and Bill Junior, and Ike, and Judith, and Hepsy, and Carrie, and little Janet, and the old Harry, and Hannibal, and Cleopatra, and Josephine,—they all sneeze at an indolent sleepy Christ-

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ianity, and say the church does not believe its own creed, and can't expect other people to."

"I should think they would be aroused to manly and womanly courses by mere love of reputation."

"They have all the reputation they want now; wide, and well established—and bad."

"What, then are you going to do about it?"

"Could I do what ought to be done, I should improve—as to clear-headedness and self devotement—those who are really, though not always nominally, the leaders of the local church and parish."

"What is the bearing of that?"

"I find on minute acquaintance with many New England towns, that the natural leaders of society, among the so-called sinners, do not take much stock in the business capacity, the breadth, the disinterestedness, the sincerity of many who affect to guide the local church."

"So that your personal appeal as a min-

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ister residing in town for a few months, does not offset the steady-going influence of these church leaders against Christianity, continued through many years?"

"Exactly. The critics may be mistaken, perhaps they are; but this is the way they look at it. These outsiders—some of them very capable, fair-minded men,—think well of the model church sisters and some of the mild-typed brethren. But they find that those whom they consider in some respects the worst persons in church and parish, have somehow come into the management of Zion's affairs,—persons lacking in well-balanced judgment and often making parochial mistakes, narrow, self-righteous, self-willed, and as liable to be mistaken in spiritual things as in carnal."

"So that the sinners conclude to take their chances in this world and the next along by the side of these shaky saints?"

"Exactly."

"What, then, O pastor wise, will be the outcome?"

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"A slight examination of history shows that the leaders of the local church do improve, that there is a steady uplift in the character of so-called Christian people, and that generation after generation, century after century, the average disciple is more like his Master. The continuance of this divine process will some day prove too much even for Hollyhock; and then the lingering paganism of the descendants of Anglo-Saxon sea pirates, now residing in Moderation, will disappear."

"That is, indeed, consoling. Yet, in this light, you must think of yourself and your pastorate as a small affair in the on sweep of the ages."

"A slight power indeed, working for a brief time, and embodying a modicum of divine energy for lifting on this tier of towns. My life and yours, O noble kinsman, are of dignity only as they are related to a Power and Plan working cycle after cycle in the moral evolution of mankind."

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“Hollyhock, then, is an incident?”

“And the parson, too, a happy or unhappy accident of the hour, making or marring the outworking plans of God.”

X

SUMMERING

WHEN I had returned to the suburbs of paradise on Cape Anne, I found upon reflection that I was personally tired of the interminable theological discussions of the period, as well as re-tired of my ministry. Tugging away at the moral elevation of mankind seemed too much of a dead lift for a man of my infirm age, so that I had some time since given up active work. Yet I could not, even if I had tried, become tired of my old boy Peter; in whom I took great pride, notwithstanding his lack of sound judgment in many matters, and his cogent maintenance of certain rather poky Isms.

When, therefore, the Moderation winter subsided, and the aquaterrene pavement of the roads had yielded to the sun and the dry-

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ing winds of April and May, and when the long lingering hope for approaching summer had given place to the pageantry of June, I went to the "H" once more, to discuss with my Nephew his somewhat slow theology, and help him pack for his sea voyaging to the Pacific Northwest,—concerning which there would be no immediate hurry of departure.

"It was my Youthful Dream," said Peter, when one day we surveyed the wave-like hills of verdure from Picked Mountain, "to emulate that Power which can raise up children to Abraham out of the stones; but I have failed utterly to do anything even with my own stoniness, let alone the tough old sinners who have stifled conscience during unnumbered ancestral ages."

"Well, my boy, if you can't get a grip on others, or shake up your own nature by a moral earthquake, you can at least study. It is quiet here, and you can make the most of yourself. And will it not be so wherever you alight on the ultramontane coast? You

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can at least control a few rational hours daily."

Much out of doors we dwelt, taking summer into our hearts, and storing the fragrance of June for use in later months, as the bees do. The exquisite season in these northern latitudes, is matched only in the surpassing beauty of the home life everywhere. I found that the angel of death, indeed, was busy, picking out here and there the flowers of paradise for transplanting to more genial clime; yet the crops of manhood and womanhood in perfected form, never fail in this rugged country. I once made a census of the number of God's nobility raised on these farms. "It is an unspeakable honor," I said, "to know such people in homely haunts."

"What's that?" quoth Peter. "Did you say homely haunts? If you mean home-like haunts, I am with you. But if you intimate a lack of beauty in our summer woods and streams and lakes and hills, or in the rural homes of our northern New England you do

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not know the place or the people, and I am against you."

All summer long, and in the early autumn, we made the most of the woodlands, and of the inland waters; and, after such moderate fashion as the country allowed, we cultivated such intellects as we found ourselves still possessed of after no small ado in the world-contending of former years.

"A vast amount of your cold icy theology, Peter," I said one morning, as we watched the day-dawn fish-hawks at Mirror Lake, "needs ventilating and thawing out in long sunny days. It needs the rise of the rose and the lily in the place of reigning frost. There needs to be a theological change of seasons."

"Very likely. Yet the months from October to April are better than August, in the realm of ideas. And it is then that I experiment on the Lumpkines of the world, to see if I can hit upon a more usable theology. I understand the truth better than I did a year ago. Would you not rather be the author of one improved statement in

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Christian doctrine than share the fame of Homer and Milton?"

"Could I be the first to discover new celestial laws, I should indeed take an animating pride in spiting the thermometer by hot-house mental growth in zero weather."

"It is what my winter is for,—to lift on Hollyhock; and to find, at least, new strength in the lifter."

"Since, Peter, you take so heartily to this, I can but regret that you did not accept the provisional call given you some months ago by that Montgomery County, Kansas, church,—‘The Old-Regular-Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit-Predestinarian-Primitive Baptist.’ They do not commonly take much stock in ministers, but they wanted you. Before you could have straightened out their kinks, you would have discovered a great deal of new truth."

Peter believed that he had a theological cast of mind; and it was one of the most solid of all the visions in his Life Dream, that he would some day stand before angels and

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men as a discoverer of new dogma or new statement. Yet, to me, during that precious dawning hour in June, whose loss I could never recover, he was merely an irksome rhetorician. In my mood of the moment he marred the gorgeous display of the morning, —the fire of God in the thickets, the sun shafts flying through leaves to alight upon the quivering lake. I could have fed him to the fishes rather than hear his intrusive clack. The miracle play of the new day impressed me then more than the wonders recorded in ancient history. I heard the church-bell birds, but my comrade was out of tune:—

“Don’t you remember, Uncle, him, who before the battle of Pharsalia offered to leave Cleopatra and the army and the empire, if an Egyptian priest would show him the sources of the Nile?”

“I was not there, my son.”

“Nathless, I have the same feeling, as to any new point in theology.”

I watched the blossoms on a blackberry

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bush, while my impertinent Nephew, with fumbling fingers, was trying to beautify God's morning by tying flowers of rhetoric upon dry sticks of dogmatic theory.

"Listen to me, O noble kinsman. In the drear winter season I meditate, like this wild apple tree; and then bring forth my bloom in the springtime."

We breakfasted five miles from the "H," at the house of Deacon Carver; a man who worried little about new truth, being content with what he had. His feet now tread the illuminated pathway of the skies.

Never before or since have I had such an interminable summer as that I enjoyed at the "H." The winter was short to it. That Puget Sound packing business, which took me to Peter's house, was a thing that could be put off. I packed a spoon a day. And upon one very busy day he packed a salt box.

Meantime we lived in the world of the woods, and talked of those themes which differentiate human life from the brutal. Our main topic was the shift of emphasis

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which we had observed in theology in recent years,—the influence of practical humanitarian work upon prominent phases of doctrine: as to God—if less of sovereignty, more of love; as to man—if less of faith, more of service. And we overhauled afresh the history of opinions, the heating and forging processes of Christian thought,—the hammering and welding of grappling irons; the church in tool making. We tickled our minds with new questions and found most of them old, and some days we balanced phrases and sought for felicitous statement, and adaptation of the truth to use.

Yet we made a truce upon the day that we sailed for the Horn and our Northwest, Peter signing a written agreement not to pester me on the voyage by curious conundrums in theology. But he refused to sign it until I had put in an article to the effect that I hold theology to be the “Queen of the Sciences;” and I also signed a detailed statement, covering a quire of foolscap, that no other science, so-called, has more effectively

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cleared itself of crudities. The Old Man Peter had prepared half a ream of learned illustrations, going to show that in all ages the physicians, lawyers, school masters, and physicists had as many foolish notions as their contemporary theologians. I picked out ninety-six closely written pages of samples, and made a suitable affidavit of my belief in the intellectual frailty of mankind, and swore stoutly that I would not, mid-seas, openly doubt Peter's ability to improve the theological creed of the ages. Then we had peace.

XI

P. T. V'S SCHEME FOR IMMORTALITY

AT the last minute before embarking we took a dentist along with us, to while away the tedium of the voyage; and we set him to filing and filing, whenever we felt as though we could no longer stand the wearisomeness of sea-going. But even that came to have a kind of sameness about it at last.

Of all monotonous months, I never saw the beat of that voyage. Life in Moderation was a whirligig to it. We changed, however, the everlasting blue to a more cheerful color, by debating the green and lambkin fields of literature. Of all the dreamers in creation, I never knew an Old Man of forty, who had so many Dreams of Youth as Peter. It was one of his dreams that he could master

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English style, and write books the world would try in vain to kill.

When the most of my sound teeth had either been pulled or filled in the attempt to divert my mind from *ennui*, which came to be finally beyond easy endurance, I used to brace up my nerves and listen to the exasperating monologues of my Nephew upon his Dream of literary production. I had heard a good deal like it before; calling up, as it did, the solemn days in which so many years ago, I walked with one now glorified. As with him who now wears another name, so of this boy Peter, grown so old, it must be said that he had a pet mania. And of all mild forms of madness, essay writing, and religious at that, seems the most inexcusable. He did not, he said, want to write more than about fifty short pieces; but I'd as soon have had seventy-five or twenty-five, for the fuss he made about them. Being at sea, it was just my luck to be Peter's sole contemporary public; and I was compelled to listen, and to take a languid interest in the conver-

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sation,—a thing hard to do in voyaging the tropics.

To give him a starter or text, I generally began by doing my best at ridicule to discourage him from inflicting those essays on mankind. “Your matter is dry, your style is bad; and, if there’s not a touch of bigotry in your works, there is a lack of liberality that I don’t like. You’ve missed your calling.”

“Nevertheless,” he replied, “what I do, may answer in a small way for a few customers, who do not know what better is obtainable. It is much as if by the ordinary law of supply and demand I were dealing in a small way in coal or salt; doing about so much when I could not look to monopolize the entire business, wholesale and retail. Were I raising potatoes or cabbages, or even manufacturing sheeting or shirts, it would be reasonable to expect to feed or clothe but few out of the untold millions of mankind. Book making is not different. I expect to reach a few. It is as if I were to raise wheat,

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or even pines in a mountain pasture; it would be for a limited market."

"If you had more intellect, Peter, you might produce books akin to the natural powers; as if you could create a climate, or throw up ranges of granite. If you could do that, all educated men would read your books, as they would visit the mountains or the sea. Plato is more necessary to man than the Alps, and Shakspeare than the ocean brink."

"That is not very bad," said the Dentist to Peter. But perhaps the Doctor did not know what I said, being a little "loud of hearing," as they say in Moderation.

It became apparent that Peter had an idea of boiling down some four thousand sermons or so, into forty; as a whaler would reduce blubber to oil. When I was uncommonly tired one day, I was favored by my Nephew with a minute estimate of the presumable cost of his funeral expenses, and such a gravestone as he thought he ought to have; and he then showed me, as an offset, an estimate made by a reliable printer of the

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cost of setting up and pressing his literary "remains."

"It is merely," he said, "a respectable style for burial. If my body were to be cremated and put in an urn, why not put my spirit into a book instead, to show to the few parties in interest what manner of man I was. Now and then one might look at it, as he would read a headstone; just as you and I go into a library now, take down a book from the shelf, read the author's name, and then replace it.

"And then, too," added Peter, in a somewhat more animated tone, and with a slight attempt at appropriate "action" in delivering his remarks, "if I can scrape together money enough to endow a book with,—it would be a fine thing to leave an endowment to some library on condition that the income should hire a poor clergyman to take one of my books out once a year for an airing, and to read it aloud in public; as an ancient emperor compelled certain teachers to read his writings upon Etruria and Carthage,

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once a year on the public square in Alexandria."

So earnest was my Nephew in this matter of making and marketing literature in a small way, that he had already bought, as he said, a gallon, or so, of that celebrated and somewhat expensive palladian oil, recommended by Milton for use in amateur authorship. And he expected, upon his present trip, to arrange with some western packing house or cannery to handle his condensed sermons like dried tongue.

"I would on no account," he added, "write too many books. I remember too well the fate of Varro."

"Do you mean P. T., or M. T.?"

"P. T."

"When did he live?"

"I don't remember."

"Where?"

"I don't care."

"What did he write?"

"Out of four hundred and ninety books,

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the names of only five have come down to us."

"What?"

"One poem on Signs. Weather signs, I believe. One geographical poem. One satire, whose memory survived because it had the good luck to be severely criticised by Master Horace. One book in praise of Cæsar, as a fighting man. And 'Argonautics;' did you ever read that?"

"Never. Never heard of it."

"Nor did you ever read Joshua Moody's four thousand and thirty-nine sermons. It is too many. Varro was altogether too voluminous."

"Four hundred and ninety books, did you say?"

"Aeschylus and Sophocles, and even Homer, were scant compared with him. Milton's fame rests on a few pages. I've determined to print not much, but little."

"It is just beginning to dawn upon me, O sagacious Nephew, just how easy it all

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is. You propose, instead of seeking the isolation of some far off country, or the loneliness of a dense city, to dwell in some small country town, and write a few books?"

"That is it, O Uncle discerning. To Mr. Johnswort and Mr. Pennyroyal, and to their large and interesting families, I hope to become well and favorably known,—as a good neighbor of scholarly tastes if not a scholar, and one of that mystic fraternity whose sign it is to touch the tile at meeting, and to be courteous; although, to the haughty Asters and obstreperous Fireweed or Cardinal flowers of the nation, I shall be known only as one individual out of all the millions enumerated by the census-taker once in ten years. In some dignified and respectable parochial solitude, I propose to make good my standing and ply my literary lever."

"That is not a bad plan, O Nephew obscure. For when the wisest of the Greeks made choice of the shape he would wear in the next stage of his being, he chose the quiet lot of a common man; 'which,' said Plato,

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‘he found lying in an obscure corner, and which all other souls had passed over,—and when he had considered it deliberately he would not have done otherwise if he’d had the first choice;’ he would have refused a lot too public, lest it limit his mental freedom.”

“I think I’ve heard you say, Uncle, that when you searched Old England for the birthplaces or homes of eminent authors, it was clear to you that intellectual power affected humble surroundings in rural communities, hamlets obscure till made famous by the work of able men.”

“I would not on any account, Peter, satirize your hopes for immortality by book-making. Even an old clerical hack, such as I am, can profitably get out of the sermon rut. I understand that you study by subjects, rather than solely for next Sunday’s sermon?”

“If I do, I do not preach by chapters, in a series of seven,—like birds in a row on a wire.”

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“ And, then in your small country congregations, if you have but one hearer, you solace yourself as Plato might have done. ‘ How many hearers did you have at lecture to-day?’ ‘ Nobody but Aristotle.’ ”

So voyaged we slowly toward a quarter of the globe, where there are vast ranges of submerged mountains, whose islet tops are scarcely seen above the waves. “ They are modest authors,” said the poetic Peter, “ whose real magnitude is little suspected by those who never take their measure.”

XII

EQUATORIAL

WHAT did I understand you to say, Peter, to be the dividing line between the hemispheres of success and failure in book making? ”

We had sighted the Brazilian coast, outlined by the day-dawn, and, eastward, the rays of the morning were tinting the sea.

“ The equator, which halves the world of literature, is the line of unique personality. On one side, a book has life and length of days; on the other is the realm of death,—as if half the globe were stacked with empty sea shells.”

“ Is it individual favor? A unique personality in words? ”

“ The authors, to whom we consent to give bed and board as household friends, are

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so few that it is not difficult to make their acquaintance; and we cling to them at once, when we find that they are not mere books but persons. It is the man behind the words. We learn that Shakspeare is himself more than any one tragedy, Milton more than his angels, Socrates and Plato more than their dialogues. We think of what the man stands for,—that one thing which he can do better than another. His book is the best of its kind. If his personality stands for enough, he will draw men to himself, like the magnetic mountain of Arabian story.”

“Is it not this personal element which vivifies our most sacred books,—the Over-soul finding expression in unique forms of the finite?”

“We soon weary of the psychological sameness of professional book makers. It is the piquancy of individual life in literature, which has an onlook toward immortality.”

“What is the so-called charm of style but the charm of an individual acquaintance

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who interests us? The style is the man speaking. Arrangement, the choice of words, the grammar and rhetoric—these well-bred schoolboy qualities, essential and fundamental, yet do not constitute personal style, which is but natural individual speech or direct human contact.”

“It is this, indeed, that makes a man’s book alive; we see the eye flash, and hear his tones,—and we are infused with his life. His mental character is in print.”

“I often fancy that I can feel the heart-beat of those authors who survive throughout the generations of men.”

“They are no more dead than the natural powers, which sleep till rightly touched. Every house may have two or three library shelves crowded with potent personalities, books charged like Leyden jars, thunder storms and cosmic energies ready to leap out when the right kind of reader handles them.”

“I have, indeed, read rare books, in which each sentence suggests some deep experi-

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ence, the agonized struggle of years compressed into a page."

"Ultimately, the birth throes of a distinctive personality, or of a new people emerging from lower condition, or of an idea new to the world,—can no more be lost out of the record of our globe than the anecdotes which relate to our cosmogony, or of the earth's crust, or of the evolution of life."

"Let us say, then, that no book dies but of internal disorder. The author is not slain but by himself."

"Not more deftly does this wandering wind of the morning gather life from off the ocean waves to fan yonder continent of the south, when it has been touched by the noon-day, than does he who is destined to an immortal heritage, gather from his own storm-tossed experience certain vital if invisible atoms to vivify the world's air currents."

Over the watery world we gazed eastward, on the watch for the turning of the gilded gates of the morning; our eyes fixed upon the long sweeping olive-green waves,

which were swiftly transformed by changing lights till the glittering sea made a path for the sunbeams.

“Must he not be a good deal of a man, to make it worth while for all men to know him; him whom they cannot match, who holds a unique mastery, whose nature is kin to the primal creative forces,—through and through a man, in the image of some divinity. He, indeed, will hold the interest of mankind.”

“His work will live, and gain new influence in proportion to the advance of the human race itself in the knowledge of those great ideas which are regnant in the highest manhood.”

“Such books must be like the ships of Lord Bacon’s simile; passing through vast seas of time, and making distant ages to participate in the wisdom, one of another.”

“Have you not read that Osiris was born in the heavenly days which Hermes won of the moon at dice? So our best thoughts are born on favored days.”

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"He only can win a hearing to-morrow, who knows to-day in his own experience those timeless moral relations which are pertinent to manhood age after age."

"Shall we say, too, O thou who dost prophesy concerning the next age, that the Divine light is like fire; and that he who has it, is himself a fire,—setting all the world ablaze?"

"If we constantly change our imagery, like the changing color of morning lights at sea, we will say that he who has discovered a new hemisphere of thought does not find it needful to found institutes in order to occupy it."

"Often he is a seer. He sees, he inspires; others act."

"It was the Dream of my Youth, and I still dream it by day and by night, to write, in some happy hour, a book whose reading will make an era in the life of some one not known to me; that which will reveal to a man his nobler self, awakening new purposes and high resolves,—a book virile, life giving,

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to which a few persons in some subsequent generation may look with gratitude."

"There is a vast demand for that kind of work. He who feeds and clothes the soul meets a perennial call. There will be never a time when there is not room for him who deals in the hidden manna and garments white."

XIII

THE MERCHANT OF LIGHT.

WE lay becalmed one day, and lounged upon the skylights under an awning, looking listlessly upon the breathless hyaline,—when my Comrade Peter again took up that interminable topic which came round throughout the voyage as regularly as the cook's rations. Wadilone, the first mate, approached the binnacle to look at the card, and the Dentist yawned once more in his ceaseless outlook over the serene ground swell of the tropic sea.

“I do not believe, Peter, in the practical wisdom of your book-making. It would ruin the ministerial profession, if it were generally adopted. Direct personal work upon the souls in your cure is the main business. The kind of book-making for a pastor

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is the writing of living epistles in apostolic method. If you modify one man's life, he will modify others to endless generations. I would rather know that you aided the spiritual life of twenty people in an obscure town than to hear that you wrote there a tolerable novel. A literary minister is but a dry book on two legs in place of a son of consolation. Your own genius for practical work is warped by your high literary ideals. Life itself is action, not a notion. Your mind has become too fastidious."

"Now, Uncle, you know better. That's all bluff."

Of which I had no doubt. At bed-rock Peter was a good pastor, and as a preacher he sought to stereotype the truth upon the hearts of his people.

"But I tell you, truly, my boy, that life's end is answered not so much by getting ideas fixed in an abiding literature, as in getting ideas fixed in improved farms; in civilizing the daily life of continents, in sending commerce abroad, and in making the life of the

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millions more comfortable; in making property more secure, and government a blessing; in educating the masses; in beneficent institutions. Books and speeches are not an end, they are means. Do not make an idol of your Youthful Dream."

"I acknowledge that he indeed is the true poet who bids the earth to rhyme with worth, who instructs the corn fields to double their golden ears, who teaches the heads of the rivers to spin and to weave, who builds iron roads and bridges the sea, who reads the rocks as if a book, who counts the atoms of the planet and the heart-beats of the sun, who tells the stars, and sees the Invisible,—who so harmonizes the wild forces of the universe with the soul of man that both shall move in measure, and chant together their song divine. But the world's work is divided, else there would be no record. The harmonies must be noted, so all can sing. I acknowledge that the rhetorician is not the worker, or worthy the highest mead. If I plod as a mere monger of words, if I match

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syllables by day and night, if I'm a drudge for my Dream's sake, no honor is mine. I but do what I am for. Still, the world applauds him who merely records the harmonies which already exist in the universe around him; who knows what is in tune; who sees the soul of beauty behind the rattling machinery of our globe; who determines the foot-pace of the men who will keep step with God."

"It is true, my noble kinsman, that the peasant and the emperor look to the race of the troubadours, to the laureate lyrists of the world, to keep alive the world's act and thought, and that the prophets and apostles of Moral Force are esteemed the leaders of mankind. Not that they are of more worth than others; their work is different, it calls for another faculty. Often, they are no match for events; they have one sole gift—of song and sight."

"May not a book, like an earthquake, topple down the king's cob house, and the author without crown or scepter rule in the

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king's stead? Do not Homer and Plato, Demosthenes and Cicero, dominate the world's warriors and philosophers and statesmen of all time? They or their kinsmen do it."

"He, indeed, is the best merchant who traffics not in jewels or silks or spicery, but in God's first creature—Light. Words control the world: and the master of expression, who voices God, is the king of mankind."

"It was the Dream of my Youth to elaborate in the closet that truth which men will proclaim from the housetop. And to-day I would lay down life itself to see the truth as God sees it, and to give it adequate expression; that it may help illuminate the world during ages to come, when the hand divinely used to record it lies in a quiet grave. It is impossible to overestimate the value of thought, that cell-germ of every act. Many are the men who lived and died in obscurity, or whose writings were received with harsh criticism, who are seated on thrones to-day, bearing intellectual scepters which are rec-

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ognized by thoughtful men all over the world."

The slightest breath of wind, which had now and then fitfully all day, like a wandering vagrant, boarded ship to slightly touch the canvas, had now wholly failed.

As we were gazing upon the smiling seas of purple in the west, after sunset, our delectable Doctor, who knew a world of things besides molars and incisors, read to us a delightful essay before the daylight faded, upon *Some Men who have Failed in Authorship*. It was much like a specialty page from a cyclopædia, enumerating the discouragements incident to the early career of those who came subsequently to great fame; perhaps came to it as Aristotle did,—a man of some note when alive, but whose manuscripts were absolutely lost for a hundred and eighty-seven years after his death, and who, for some centuries thereafter really failed of that fame which ultimately gave him a great grip on this globe as the master of those who know.

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In reflecting upon all this, when I had turned in for the night, I could but fix my mind with more complacency than common on my half a hog'shead of old sermons, that I had stored for safe keeping in the attic over Brother Allen's store.

Yet we had slept so much all day between bits of talk that we merely rolled over wide-awake in our close quarters, and turned out soon after we had turned in. Once upon deck we found our barque slipping softly along the placid sea under a light air from the eastward; and we were as ready to walk up and down and talk all night as Annadowe and Norcutt to exchange their yarns of the sea.

After an hour the wind freshened, and we went forward to listen to the gurgling of the water, as it eddied under the counter; and then aft, we lay upon our backs in the warm summer night, to watch the swaying spars and the spangled skies.

"This perpetual life out of doors on shipboard just suits me," remarked Peter.

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"I have all the vigor of the sea in my finger tips."

To which I replied, "You must often have attempted to read what makes you tired, written when the authors were constitutionally tired. A book ought to be as full of energy, to reach far-away continents and centuries of men, as the Southern Cross to shoot its star beams hither."

"I wish," said my shipmate, "that I could gain, as a part of my literary stock in trade, an infinite delicacy of expression, the courtesy of refined life in letters; but I do not know how to get it, unless I myself become refined and courteous to a degree incompatible with the old Adam in me, or that savage man primeval whose taint I cannot get rid of in one life time."

"Possibly one or two transmigrations will help you. The character of every writer is made known in his work, as a king's face is stamped on his coins; and if you have a perfect passion for reducing the truth to just and entertaining formulas, you can never

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succeed till you become the embodiment of truth in your own life."

"I have not attended enough to that, but busied myself with details of style. I delve in the dictionary, and seize and smelt and smith the silvery words for shining service, lest unadorned common sense be wearisome."

"Is not perfection perfect in trifles? Michael Angelo made as great a success at cutting cameos as he did in cutting the eikon of Moses."

"Come what will, I can but attempt to write. If I may not write a poem, I will seek rhythmical words; and if I may not excel in prose, I will attempt to frame one good sentence; and, if that be denied me, I will seek some felicitous phrase; and if for that I have no talent, I will look for one word richly endowed with the treasure of storied generations."

"That is to make of writing a fine art. Are not our best books gifted with immortality? Will the walls of sculptured marble

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and the galleries of pictured canvas attract the eyes of men longer than the masterpieces of word-artists in the great libraries of the world? ”

“ Not more rightfully is poetry ranked as a fine art than literary prose style at its best. Will not its purity and strength endure age after age? ”

“ Mankind is enamored of polished thought. It is like the love of a boy for smooth stones of the brook, to which he is insensibly attracted.”

“ Literary work in good taste, is appreciated even by those who cannot analyze it, as beauty is instinctively recognized or its absence noted.”

“ Can there be such an artistic handling of works as to match the perfection of natural scenery? Will there never be born, as the ages go by, some literary artist, concerning whom it may be said that our Cape Anne coast never knew how its face looked to others, until he painted it? ”

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"History, handled by an artist, may be made more delightful to the imagination than the very life it portrays."

"Is it not possible then to so vivify the moral ideals of humanity as to win their universal acceptance? If the world is ever renewed it will be by words, which fitly express the life-giving energies of that Spirit which brought forth order and beauty by speaking one word—Light."

"Will there never be attained a literary power that is as perfectly adapted to do its work as a sunbeam?"

We had now to screen ourselves from the wind; and, before morning, the rolling ship constantly broke the water by her falling counter; and here and there we could discern through the darkness the phosphorescent height of curling surges; and the breeze moaned like a rising gale through the rigging.

XIV

A GLIMPSE OF THE CHANGELESS DAY

IT was after we had rounded Cape Horn that our cargo shifted, throwing the ship so far upon her beam ends that our masts presented an angle of forty-five degrees, and for forty-eight hours our lee was under water. When the gale that knocked us down had subsided, the sea was still undulating in vast mountains and deep vales of water; and we knew that if another blow should set in, the ship would go down.

Our thoughts could but center on our complete separation from our little world of home life.

"The wider world," I said, "will never know our loss. The foundering of the *La Plata*, will fill but a line in the mercantile record,—45 S., and 80 W. There are on an average not less than six recorded wrecks

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every day of the year in the half world north."

"It must be," replied Peter, "that during every hour in the twenty-four, somebody is struggling somewhere in the wide sea, hopelessly battling with cruel waves,—nearly a score of men sinking into these deep graves every day."

Upon the second day the men had become somewhat used to the peril that threatened to engulf us. The sea was going down, and we were not without hope. Yet the situation sobered us, and our words were like those we might have spoken had we been sitting all day upon a coffin lid, watching sea and sky for any change of weather that might be our last summons.

It required some resolution to shake ourselves free from our circumstances so far as to maintain conversation. Yet our only hope was to keep up hope, and carry on our affairs. The sun was lighting up the sea, and Captain Douglas believed that he could right the ship.

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"As for me," I said, "death's surprisal shall find me at my common avocations."

I remember how grimly, how resolutely, we carried on our conversations, as if we had a thousand lives before us—which indeed we sanguinely hoped for.

"We may yet find long continued life," I said, when it was coming night on the second day. "Yet we must face the possibility of finding its continuance in another world than this. And if it be so, what has come from all your Youthful Dream to 'bridge the space ethereal to the stars,' as you used to say, 'to gain immortal fame'?"

"I do not think that what I have done is to be taken as life's measure," my Nephew replied; "since so much that I have attempted to do has been thwarted by others or by my own ill-judgment or want of skill. Success is found solely in character: in the education of faculties, the conduct of life, the capitalization of manhood by unselfishly imitating the Son of Man in living for other people. This discipline of the soul is from

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within. Character-building, the accumulation of personal worth, is not a thing that is wrought outside of ourselves. And all that we aim for, strive for, is recognized by Him who knows all our limitations, those within and without; so that life is no wreck,—even if it end on a raft mid-seas.”

“If there are a thousand million books in the world to-day, Peter, how much posthumous fame do you look for in the two or three which you had printed?”

“My own volumes will float a few years,—as we may now for only a few hours,—upborne by happy chance; and they will then be overwhelmed by the onrolling waves of a measureless sea of literature—deep upon deep till time be no more.”

“Your printed and my unprinted papers will at last perish bodily, whether dry or moist, by the tooth of time or worm; as our own bodies cannot keep long afloat under the sun, whether we go down to-night or ten or twenty years from to-night.”

At this moment I sought out Captain

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Douglas, who was scanning the sea and sky, but I could get no hope from him that we should certainly escape more serious disaster. Yet, by sheer force of will, I determined to keep the mind of my Nephew to that Dream of his Youth, which I thought had the firmest hold on him.

“You have, my boy, done well in your short years to keep your bookwork fairly alive, and within the search of a few persons.”

“I did once dream, dear Uncle, that I should master a few centuries. Yet this vain dream was really but the prompting of a constitutional love of life. I could but cling, perhaps morbidly, to the notion of a life beyond my life, as if I could be in fame a tenant still of this tiny world after I myself have fled to other realms. Yet, if we sink in the sea to-night, I have in my earthly race won only the goal of obscurity; oblivion falling like a pall.”

“But you have been in your day, Peter, a very notable man; at one time advertised

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widely in the current life of at least your small religious sect."

"Advertised is the right word: that is true. But where does advertisement end, and fame begin? I have, as you know, grudged every hour of my life in which I have been cheated of my privacy. Notoriety is far removed from reputation, and reputation from fame. If by dint of advertising I have caught the eye of a few persons of little discernment, and if a very few have rated me too high, they will when their eyes are open discover it—and then turn about and rate me too low. So much for living on the street."

"Still, that noisy street, that unsatisfactory publicity, was better than this private and lonely craft in the remorseless sweep of the billowing graves around us."

"What! is it possible, Uncle, that even you cannot by force of will forget our situation? Pluck up heart; let us keep to the topic."

"I suppose, then, my beloved, that many obscure persons have perished in humoring

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the notion that their fame would live after them; but they were forgotten, perhaps three or four thousand years ago."

"There is, I believe, a photographic dissolving-view apparatus attached to literature. Authors whom we see, or have known about as neighbors, soon disappear; and other faces come in sight, dimly at first, then clearly,—then they too are lost to the eye forever."

It had become evident by this time that the weather was not mending; the early stars were obscured, and the sky was thickening. I knew it, Peter knew it, the men all knew it: our knell had struck.

"We shall never be missed outside our own circle," I said, when the rising wind began to make our position more perilous. "Our names will be blown about for a little while, like shattered hulks floating the seas: which, if hailed, never answer; ill-omened, and threatening peril to good ships until broken up at last by the storms."

"Yet it is a happy compensation that with

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the receding memory of our lives, our very imperfections will be lost sight of."

"And it is a delight to think that we shall be superseded by others, better balanced and more competent for life's work."

"And, too, the personal influence even of our perished books will live, if there is vital seed in them; for the truth can never die. All thought worth saving will survive in other forms, in the lives of men if not in literature."

A driving mist had now come on, thick and dark; and our barque was still knocking about like a chip in the waves, drifting to fate unknown, yet known too well.

Then we were silent for hours, straining our eyes in the blackness of darkness, the gloom of the sea. And far, far from the northland came distinct visions seen through one valley of death; yet neither of us would speak of what we saw.

"The inexorable moment is advancing," said my spiritual kinsman at last, arousing himself once more, as if his will were hardly

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equal to a return to reasonable continuity of conversation,—“When our names will cease to be uttered, or remembered, upon this globe. The time cannot be far away, even if a few generations shall first go by.”

“How vain,” I replied, rallying myself to echo his thought. “How vain the attempt to sound the abyss of unfathomed ages by throwing in a book, rather heavy, for a plummet.”

“I fear, Uncle, that your head is already a little dazed, if that is your metaphor. Let us think, rather, of the relative eternity of the waves, and of the continents, while we perish like shell-fish. The implacable on-sweeping years, like these conscienceless waves, will give no sign that we ever existed.”

“What, then, is life but a penguin cry?”

“Or a bursting bubble of foam from the sea?”

It was soon after noon next day that our barque foundered, and Peter and I were left afloat upon the sea. We were drawn down

into the vortex of the sinking hull; and then, upon rising, I caught firm grip on a floating top-gallant-mast and rode easy, and Peter I saw clinging to a spar.

There had been no serious blow, yet it took little disturbance to work our ruin. A heavy mist still partially veiled from our sight the swirling and plunging of the sea.

When it lifted slightly, Peter cried,—“There’s the air raft.” And he cast loose, and swam for it, and climbed upon it. And I followed.

It proved that both air tubes were sound, although not fully inflated; on the one that had most air in it we sat with our feet upon the canvas between the tubes. We were continually under water up to the waist, with the sea breaking over our heads every now and then. And the froth of the sea was flying past upon the driving wind.

If I was older than Peter, he was not more tough and wiry than I; and I had sufficient heart in me to pluck up his slightly sinking spirits lest he lose his grip on life. It would

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never do for us to sink first into despair, and then into the deep.

When it came nightfall the sky was clearing; yet, the sea was still running high, and the hollows between the waves were deep enough to receive a regiment. A black wall closed around us. And over us the smiting seas occasionally made a clean breach; first breaking on the raft, then rising and curling and falling upon us. It was not long so, but it seemed long to us. We noticed when the moon came up, and knew that it must be then a little before midnight. Before morning the sea moderated somewhat; and we pulled ourselves together as well as we could—cuddling each other for the sake of heat, my head over my Nephew's shoulder, and my arms around his neck. Then we would drop off into a doze; and when we awoke with a start, we had almost always been dreaming about food.

The morning sun came up with blinding splendor, and our benumbed limbs were glad of the day.

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"One empery is denied me," I said; "a silent sunny hillside, and the sweep of summer winds,—and the fall of friendly tears upon the grass."

"Let us rather say,—‘I asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it me, even length of days forever and ever.’ I despise myself for raising the miserable question whether or not my recorded character on the earth will be remembered. It is not worth remembering long. I go hence to other worlds; my character, my life, my hope, my activity I shall take with me. And my household friends, my Queen, my children, and all those who are my spiritual kinsfolk, will haste to follow by land if not by sea."

"It is now the judgment day," I said. "My present character, as I have made it, is my final award. I acknowledge God's righteousness, and crave His mercy."

"Perish all earthly fame, I cry. Of what further use is the world to me?"

"Yet it has been of use in our laying the bases for eternity."

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“What is this life but the daybreak of eternity?”

“It is to us the morning hour.”

“Hail, all hail, thou changeless day.”

Length of days, however, came to us upon this earth. It was just before nightfall that we were rescued by the *Lamont*, of Portland, commanded by Captain Hooper.

The Dentist, too, and the first mate of the *La Plata*, and three of the crew had been already picked up together; else the rescue would not have been upon the sharp lookout for others.

XV

A DREAM CITY IN THE SKY

WE did not stay long in the Pacific Northwest, since even my leisurely old age had other engagements, and the Old Man Peter deemed the climatic conditions—which are so admirably suited to others—not favorable to the constitutional requirements of his own family, so that he did not care to move them three thousand miles to this rising empire of the Puget Sound country. What time we did stay, we roamed hither and thither, ministering and being ministered unto. The personal inquiry which we made concerning the relation of the clerical calling as such to the moral needs of this new region, proved to be our only serious errand in this delectable sunset and sea-greeting land; and to this we gave no small time and debate.

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Upon the first dawn after our arrival, I was awakened by an explosion near my window; it was really but an unusually loud breaking of the day—the Sabbath. Ludowick was too busy with drill-tools and powder, in making a home for himself, to stop on the first day of the week,—but then, he and his maiden sister did take an excursion boat at half-past ten; and they thought it a good day for good work, since the maiden came round toward evening with George Pitcoke to be married.

Peter and I duly desecrated the day by attending a religious circus; having more fun than we anticipated, but less than if it had been secular instead of sacred. The comical cutting up of the clerical clown who had toured some thousands of miles a-candidating, seemed more serious to Peter than to me; since the service wrought upon my nerves hysterically,—so sharply had a reaction set in after that terrific Sunday in the sea.

In my excitable condition, my brother clown's voice grated sharply like the filing of

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a mill-saw; to Peter his gestures were like those of St. Vitus; to us both his contortions were sibylline, and he reasoned like a gong. He had read Plato to be sure, but the literary and philosophical mince meat he doled out in spiced patties bore less resemblance to Attic beef than Kansas sausage. A cannibal, in carving a roast missionary, could not have done it with more zest than the press reporter of next morning when he dissected my brother Abraham Sutcliffe, who wore various titles by grace of a small western college. The reporter, it seems, attended also the evening performance; and he told the wondering world, in stolen imagery, that the Reverend Doctor shone as "a pillar of brass by day and a pillar of gas by night."

Peter and I went in the evening with nine hundred and ninety-eight other young men to hear Richard Leghorne, who is one of the great powers in this new country; his relation to society being like that of Ranier or Hood to the natural scenery of this coast. Nothing, indeed, can be more noble and im-

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pressive to a stranger than these mountains, unless it be the moral attitude of the best representatives of the press and the pulpit and the bar, in this region of so great promise; the mountains and the men belong in the same category, to my thinking.

In travel far and travel near in our own country, I have never seen mountains more notable than these great white cones, which glorify so large an area in Oregon and Washington. The dark forests and smiling fruit lands, the shining waters and the thrifty towns, are forever set apart as not common or unclean by their relation to a few magnificent peaks in this favored region, where snow-clad mountains are always in sight. The beauty of the Columbia and of the Sound, a region of almost perpetual summer, is, to the artist, greatly distinguished from that of other inland waters by the neighborhood of these white zones of the upper air.

Mount St. Helen in the Southern Cascade of Washington is a regularly rounded cone without fault in its outline; white, unmarked

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by ridge and shadow. As seen from near the Columbia, it hardly has foothills. Away to the east of it, rising from a relatively flat country, is seen Mt. Adams, with its ice caves. Mt. Hood—threescore miles east of Portland—is in the same quadrant of the horizon; of majesty so great that one might go far to see it,—a gleaming pyramid, standing apart, rising above an imposing platform of rugged country, and with its shining sides slightly marked by soft shadows and rough ridges. These peaks impart dignity to the low banks of the river, and the rich but untamed lands which are opened here and there a little by settlers.

In everyday city life, in ferrying to and fro on business and in looking out of office windows, there are constant visions, hourly changing, any one of which would inspire a painter, or set into blaze the devotion of a saint.

I would ask for no nobler artistic fame than would be mine, if I could paint Ranier as I have seen it. It stands alone, far away

from a mountain range, or any heights that compare with it. If I look through a fir-clad valley south I see beyond the tree tops, the clouds rolling across the base of the mountain, and fragments of cloud floating upward that reveal the mountain side as a background between cloud flecks; and above them, as if hanging in the sky, unsupported by the earth, I see the immense dome. Its tone of blue is so tempered by the moving wind as to relieve the mountain of all earthly grossness, giving it a sky tint; while the color form stands out boldly from an atmosphere of neutral vapor. And the mass, so hanging in the sky like a well-defined cloud, is marked by blue shadows on the west and on the western slopes of the north-side ridges; while the eastern exposures are glistening snow-fields in the sunlight.

Some other day I look upon Ranier between a right and left frame of fir-clad ridges; with a foreground of water, and a line of firs beyond it, looking southward. Beyond the fir line are, distant wooded

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heights of blue, seen so clearly through the haze that the tallest trees stand out sharply as towers on the top of the forest uplands. Beyond all, rising against the southern sky, is the vaguely-defined and dull-colored base of the mountain, and the cone itself leaping into the upper atmosphere to a height of more than two miles and a half. The eastern side is in Rembrandt shadow; while on the west the snow sheets gleam in the sun, with long shadows following those spurs that descend from the top of the western base.

Or, more delightful yet is the vision of an April day, when the base is lost in clouds, and the top appears as a light blue amid a fleecy vapor which fills the southern quarter of the heavens. These sunny clouds are so loosely disposed that patches of blue sky are seen through them; and the peak itself, with base concealed, appears cloud-like,—as if of like texture with these broken-tissued vapors of the southern sky: the appearance of open-work clouds being made upon the dome, by bright snow ridges and blue shadows alter-

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nating; as if its solid form were as unsubstantial as the peaks of cloud-range on either side. The distance, some sixty miles, is such as to favor the illusion. Indeed, this view, so cloud-like, might have easily escaped me altogether, had I not known the point to search for Ranier.

In many years of observing cloud effects upon mountains, I do not remember any picture more beautiful than this,—unless it was one I saw from a point west of the peak, when there were fleecy clouds in the east; among the clouds, I saw the white crags of Ranier,—the dome hidden, and the base hidden. The snow-clad crags were standing amid the floating fleece, as if they were fixed clouds,—sharp-edged and glistening in the sun; a belt of such extent along the horizon, and so far above it, as to appear like the shining walls of a dream city in the sky.

Upon some days, the grandeur of this matchless mountain is increased by a quaint banner flying from the peak. It is when the atmospheric conditions are such that vapor

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on the wind is condensed into a cloud, upon passing from the sunny side of the cone to the cooler shaded side. The top is then a veritable cloud factory; and a ribbon of vapor flies out, flung from a flagstaff more than fourteen thousand feet high. This streamer is two miles and a half long, and as white as the snow. And the color effects of the peak itself render the flagstaff more impressive than the banner; the ravines that are in shadow being so blue as to lead one to compare them with the sky above them, and the snow fields so like the tint of the flying cloud, that the mountain itself belongs to the sky rather than to the earth; and the picture might easily pass for a celestial phenomenon, if the foot hills were concealed by clouds.

Mt. Ranier can be seen in almost every part of Western Washington, except at Tacoma, but there a surpassingly beautiful mountain can be seen in its place,—which can be seen from nowhere else than this favored spot. It is the mountain for which the beautiful city itself is named.

XVI

THE PRINCESS

THERE is a charming part of this coast known as the Fog Belt. It was in this elysium that I encountered the happy ghost of my old Boston friend Jones of the Norfolk House, wandering everywhere with that peripatetic shadowy umbrella, searching for those "large arrears of rain," which, being overdue, he was always expecting and always prepared for. It was, too, in this misty region, that I saw the deep saw-dust and slab foundations of the great cities of future years,—so quickly rising upon harbors of predestined fame.

Our most delightful trip was an outing amid the great forests and fine farms of the Humptulips country and the Quinault Lake district. And one Sunday we spent in that

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metropolis of the coal fields, so felicitously named Burnt Log city.

This whole country from northern California to Victoria has more to sell and less to buy than any other equal area in America—a remark with an emphasis north of the Columbia. And these west coast harbors will be the base of Asiatic and American traffic for unending generations; not near and not far is the time when a dense population will crowd the affluents of the lower Columbia and the inland Puget sea.

Amid our diversion of staging the Pacific beaches or steaming the broad waterways—gazing upon the stupendous scenery of this coast, or constantly attracted by the novelty of new settlements,—it was peculiarly hard for Peter to interest me in his interminable disquisitions upon the relation of religious principle to the evolution of society both new and old. So slow, indeed, was my aged head to recover from my salt water shock in floating thirty-six hours at death's door, that during my entire stay on

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the northwest coast I sedulously chose to laugh rather than cry. Do what he could, my Nephew found it impossible to lead me to entertain serious views of life, until we were fairly voyaging toward the Canadian mountain train. And even then I was more amused by the play of the gulls about the steamer, and the thick weather and rough sea in the straits, than by what my companion said.

Although it was not Sunday, when we steamed away from the commercial capital of this country seated upon its Seven Hills, yet we found the boat crowded with excursionists. They were outbound to celebrate a Queenly birthday in that quaint delight of west coast Englishmen, Victoria. And—although it was no Sunday School picnic—the boat was crowded full with earnest-minded men and women, whom we found to be singularly in earnest to build the kingdom of God on that coast. Indeed I did not talk with one milliner, dressmaker, or woman of all work, one daughter or matron, one car-

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penter, sailmaker, or iron worker, one real estate trader or money lender, one doctor or lawyer, one teacher or editor, who was not, according to his own account and credible evidence, aiming for life's highest ends. These people interested me more than Ranier.

And my Nephew, too, finding that I was but a languid listener to his theories upon the evolution of religion in man, left me to my benighted condition; and turned his attention for six hours to conversing with these everyday endeavorers in practical Christian living.

Now, if there is any one thing that I take pride in, it is in trying to turn the handle of the world my way; I found, however, that the average man upon the *Princess* was quite ready to allow the world's work to be divided. For my part I would have put every child of the King in that crowd through one discipline and into one profession; and Peter I overheard contending with editor Rowland Stanlocke that the office of preacher in a new land was that most to be desired.

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Nor was there found any one to stand stiffly against this proposition; for even Peter—heretic that he was, with confused ideas of the Church—did not claim that a clergyman was more of a man, or clothed with more priestly authority, than a conscientious brick-layer. And since there was not one of these sensible men and women who did not take to some practical form of associated service for up-building good society, it was generally agreed that if any man were lucky enough to be fit for leadership in matters of conscience and worship and the judicious application of divine rules to society as it is, his business would indeed be the best. Still, Skiffe the pilot came nearest to the truth when he said,—“Of all seamen I ever saw, there was never one who kept an even hand or was always at his best. And the most lucky Cap'en is he who has a crew that understands sea-going a'most as well as he does.”

I am sorry, however, to confess it, but there is no doubt that on the whole I preferred to talk with Peter alone and at leisure

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about reaching the masses, than to deal myself personally with that part of the masses represented by these eminently respectable passengers on the *Princess*. If I do not idolize my calling, I love to idealize it in conversation with my peers, whom I think of as not likely to say disagreeable things about the profession, even if true.

Then, too, I was glad enough to get out of that crowd into the wilds of the four mountain ranges of Western Canada, counting him a happy man who passes through them by rail. If I had not been there before, when the road first opened, and seen them in all their wintry fascination, and traversed their fields of ice in wide solitudes at ten thousand feet, and watched the formation of torrents of two thousand feet fall in heavy spring rain storms; if I had not compared these countless fantastic peaks and massive upright walls with the most favored American mountain districts,—then I should speak less confidently in saying that he indeed is a

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happy man whose good fortune leads him to follow the track I took with Peter.

But the poetry of the peaks was soon out of mind, when we struck the waters of the Saskatchewan, and I gave myself up to my Nephew to give and to take upon the points that he urged. And this course we pursued to vary our journey, through the fertile prairies of Manitoba, and along the north shore of Superior, toward the Eastern Sea.

“Did you know, Uncle, that I have had no Ideal of Life so dear to me as that of preaching in a new country to just such a congregation as that on the *Princess*? But I should have to be made over to do it well. I would throw up my ambition even for book making, if I could write on the heart of the average man the message I have from God. I write a book because I can tinker at it, and mend it forever like a gipsy’s coat; but could I stand for thirty years in one pioneer pulpit, and win a hearing and win the men, I would do that,—and leave the making of poems

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and proverbs to some man of different stamp. Could I pour my life into the current of my generation, it would be better than to pour it into ten volumes octavo; but I am no match for this preaching business, which is not other than to glow and to flame as the very prophet of the Most High. Even if as a bookish man with a pietistic turn of mind I am not utterly useless, yet as to pulpit doors I am a mere fumbler."

"What's the matter, Peter, that you cannot preach?"

"I ought first to know everything knowable on earth about God, His moral attributes, His natural laws, the man He made, the course of history, and the building of society by the Golden Rule. And I ought to be set on fire of God; and so endowed with the power of the Highest as to lift men out of common moods and set them on life's highest plane,—Sunday by Sunday to make men forget their ordinary callings and stand face to face with God. My life too, should be what Hooker called visible rhetoric: I

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must be God-possessed. Men seeing me should easily read God's word in my life: if not, I cannot make good my moral leadership."

"What then you mean, is clerical fulness of knowledge, specializing in all that relates to the right conduct of life, and the unction of the Holy One—these three,—or close the pulpit."

"Yet is not preaching an art as well as an inspiration? Is not a man to be trained for it, as a horse for racing? Do we not live in an age of specialties? Rhetorical and elocutionary gifts are to be developed, else close the pulpit. If the minister is merely a theologian, an ecclesiastical student, or a man of letters—if he cannot first of all preach and carry the crowd, draw, hold, instruct, and uplift as with the arm of God,—then bar him out of the pulpit. In moral leadership let him step out who cannot lead. Is it not sheer stupidity to put men into pulpits, who are short of ordinary rhetorical gifts and long of wind, who prose on platitudes and

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have no radiant energy, who drawlingly present incoherent notions, when there are only fifty-two field days in a year in which the most thoughtful people of the nation gather—in majestic millions—to worship and to hear God's message? Is not that pulpit powerless which leaves men morally at night where they were in the morning?"

"When I once preached to the most eminent statesman in America he thanked me for not speaking on his specialty, but on the moral relation between man and his Maker, for appeal to conscience and Supreme authority. This taught me that if I would lead, it must be through a message from heaven. And there can be no crushing competition by other professions for moral leadership in America, if the more than two millions of religious services, which are held every year, are led by those who make a specialty of dealing with moral relations, and who stick to their calling, appealing to the moral sense of mankind, and enforcing it by divine mandate."

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“What the pulpit is for is not to compete with the lecture hall, the forum, the bar, the sanctum, but to occupy the unique ground of moral leadership; not else can it stand or ought it to stand. It is God’s instrument in His hand, or it is to be trampled under the feet of advancing hosts of men.”

“The continents are up, and all our tribes are on the move. Unless the pulpit is held by men who can preach, who can win a hearing for moral truth, and take fast hold on the inner man—the better man within,—then these crowding masses will take and should take other guides.”

“Is not our thinking world to-day at such a crisis as to wipe out clerical ciphers? Yet he is in the world’s best business who is singularly endowed of God, and who has the immeasurable power of the Almighty undergirding him for moral leadership in these most notable days of history.”

“You prophesy to me of the men of the next age.”

“No, of this. There was never a better

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hour than this; and never an hour when the truth of God was more triumphant through its own inherent energy, in spite of the imperfection of human instrumentality."

"All this, Peter, that we have said, is good enough as to preaching at its best. Yet the kingdom of God can never be carried on except through the divine use of the average man, and the average man is often licensed to preach, and he preaches well enough."

"No, I do not agree that it is well enough. There was Dr. Sutcliffe: did he not mount a stuffed spread eagle in his study, as an emblem of his style? It was an act inimical to the residing there of that Holy Dove, which is figured in the New Testament story. Yet I take back a part of what I said about qualification to carry the crowd. The stars of God differ in glory. But let them all burn by Divine Light. Let the average man, if he will preach, rise above the average as to his knowledge of God, as to moral relations, and as to his own relationship to the Divine indwelling. If he does

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that, he is called to an apostleship: the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come."

"That is a more just statement. We will say then, that—whoever the man is and whatever his intellectual outfit,—unless the secularities of life are set aside as impertinent in the hour of composition, unless the atmosphere of his study is surcharged with a spirit of devotion, unless it is filled with celestial song and the presence of the Holy One, his sermon will be of the earth earthy."

"Yet: let him be interesting, if not graphic; warm blooded, if not able to heat and fuse all wills into one; imaginative, if not seraphic; with the glow, pathos, poetry, dramatic power, and pungent appeal of the Hebrew prophets."

"If this be so, must not all this be thought of in planning the sermon? Is not the plan to admit of it, and provide for it? Must not the plan be wrought out when the mind is at white heat through communion with Jehovah?"

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“Bad sermons, sermons that are not earnestly pushing for a definite point, sermons that do not mean spiritual business, sermons that are not dramatically constructed by gathering up all the elements and making for one result—such sermons cannot be preached with any degree of power; and those who preach such sermons are not in a prophetic calling.”

“He must be hot-hearted who will warm the hearts of his hearers. Will not a God-possessed man be fully engrossed in his subject, and bend all his might to stamp the truth on those who listen? Will he not be all soul, all fire, heeding his divine thought only?”

“Not else can one in a few moments alter the settled convictions of years.”

“Let us ask then: Does not the Holy Spirit to-day need voices to cry in this world’s wilderness? The written word is not enough. The eye, the voice, the pleading, the beseeching,—something more than

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mere script or cold type is needed. What is the difference between writing and speaking but the difference between lava cold and lava hot?"

"A voice, a voice, gentle as the murmuring brooks, or the rustling of forest leaves, a still small voice mightier than the wind or the earthquake, an affectionate and fearless voice,—is not this the voice which prepares the way of the Lord?"

"The voice? Of what is it the voice?"

"A voice divine, uttering God's message."

"The message? Is it possible to get the truth at first hand, as if no one had ever heard it before? To make it known to others vividly, authoritatively, as if for the first time revealed? If not, is the disciple at first hand with his Master? If not, does he abide in God? If not, is he the abode of God? If not, is he a branch of the Vine?"

"If not, then is the preacher no seer. It is the seers who are divine powers; who behold the truth and its personal relations as

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if in a vision; and who voice the truth like a trumpet out of heaven, or like one of the seven thunders heard on Patmos."

"What is this but what aims for immediate effect? Not for applause but for the swaying of human hearts. The vehement emotion of the speaker, his incarnation of spiritual energy,—how can it but command attention? Deep calling unto deep in resistless tide is but a figure of sacred eloquence at its best."

"It is not the preacher's message that needs to be changed but the hearer's life; it is a call for immediate decision, the uttering of words that will never cease to ring in the ears of his people and to thrill their hearts."

"A fitting truth spoken at the moment that was made for it—what mightier power is there on this globe?"

XVII

PARADISE

WHEN once we reached the Atlantic coast, we found ourselves in paradise. Is any one willing to betray ignorance of its location?

It was a very hot May morning; and we seated ourselves in a very uncomfortable position upon the craggy side of Image Hill where we could see the profile.

“Manchester-by-the-blue-sea is indeed a paradise,” said my companion; “a false paradise, related to the true as this grotesque image is to the Apollo.”

“A paradise without alloy,” I said, brushing away pestiferous insects from about my ears. The warm wind was west, and those early summer visitants had sought the sunny side; and we, like contending angels in a

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fallen paradise, earned all the comfort we took.

"It is a tradition, Peter, that this image can be seen only once in nine years. Do you remember that I pointed it out to you twenty-seven years ago?"

"In thrice nine years, I've never seen it again till to-day."

"It was here I heard Molly Sinet one midnight. She sat where we do now, and I stood on the cliffs above. The steeple struck one twelve times. Lighting her pitch-knot, she read in a loud voice out of the imprecatory Psalms. Then putting out the lights, she muttered horrible curses in the darkness. Upon the same night, at the same hour, Solomon Fowler's brig went down."

"This paradise had then a fallen angel in it? It is, then, no paradise."

"Except in the early morning, when the black ducks and the fishermen are out to watch the dawning day."

"Is no one else awake?"

"The nimble sand-piper."

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"And the sea-mew silently sweeping the still waters."

"The morning, then, is paradise. And the woods, all day; within sound and sight of the sea. Then, too, we have a winter paradise on the deserted shore."

"I am grateful that my child-life was maddened by Pan."

"Precious pagan."

"Not a day went by that I did not walk the woods or shore, to pick up shreds of that tuneful reed scattered along my path by Pan. My imagination lived in the wilderness, or by mountain streams. I am grateful that you taught me this delightful out-of-door idolatry."

There being not a film in the dome of the sky, and the heat being oppressive, we put up our broad sun-umbrellas, and made our way to the cooling woods. Finding upon the flanks of Moses Hill a pasture pine with two spires, Peter climbed one, and I the other; so that we could sit near each other, and be, if possible, much more uncomfort-

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able than upon the ragged rocks of the earlier morning. Yet on the spires of pine we were above the average mosquito wing, and in the shade with a slight air stirring; and we could look down upon the twinkling leaves of the birch, the maple, and the shining oaks; and from our hill towers could watch the flight of birds below us; and look out, seaward, upon the island world and the white wings of the deep beyond the burnished harbor.

“I do not worship the sea,” quoth my pagan nephew,—much to my surprise, since I had supposed he did; “but I love to worship my Maker in the sight of His sea. And it is a great relief, after all my years of globe-trotting to visit again this *quasi* paradise of childish days. The roots of my spiritual life are fast in the soil of Manchester, like the barberry and the pine, or the oak clinging to the scant soil of these ledges.”

“If we are both not unlike those restless sailors who can never be at peace until they have wet their skin in every ocean, so let

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our conversation, in these slightly swaying, uneasy tree-tops, voyage hither and yon, trying different theories for the conduct of life."

"Prosing to the last, even at your age?"

"For twenty-five years it has been known to me that, whatever betides, you have given a great amount of time to peripatetic devotion; doing it all by measure, so much a week. If you began it at fifteen, when it was all well enough, what makes you still do it? I made up my mind, years ago, never to pray for anything that I could take by my own hands. If I pray for things within reason and within the Scripture as to warrant and condition, I go to, and exercise faith upon the instant without making undue fuss about it."

If my Nephew was more emotional than I, my constitutional or hereditary piety gave me some advantage.

"It is a delicate point to debate, Uncle; but there are rational grounds to go upon."

Of all the Life Dreams of my dreaming

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Peter, this was his pet; of his life currents, this was the deepest and swiftest.

The light wind of the morning had now shifted, and I noticed that the breeze was freshening outside, sending inland a strong salt breath from distant leagues of crested waves. And I could hear afar that some storm, now spent, was sending shoreward its dying winds and billows. No conversation and no companionship of the whispering leaves could now detain us longer upon our thrones of pine; and we went at once to Pedaughiouik, a ledge greatly scarred by thunderbolts; and there after a lunch of swordfish and clams, we resumed near sunset our conversation of the morning. It was all in one breath, on Peter's part,—a Coleridgean monologue:—

“Do you ask why I spent two hours a day in what you call devout exercises? ‘Studies’ I call them. When I was a boy you taught me to give heed to the Hebrew, and to pray; I do it now because it suits my moral constitution. During many years I have read not

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less than a cart load of ethnic religious books, and of criticisms upon Hebrew literature, and the writings of religious doubters or unbelievers; and I have read the principal secular and religious histories of the world; and I have so far read the principal treatises upon modern science as to understand the relation that exists between new truth and the old; and now I have no doubt whatever that the Hebrew thought represents the world's high-water mark in moral suggestiveness, and it is to me a conscience law upon grounds that seem reasonable; so that in the maturity of life after varied experiences, I am as well satisfied of the Divine personality and intelligent interest in man's moral being as I am of the existence of gravitation and its grip on things material; and this being so I spend a fair fraction of every week, if not every day, in finding out God and my personal relation to Him,—and this seems to me a very sensible thing to do. Am I not, as a man, as well endowed as a cabbage? If even the *symprocarpus fætidus* is blindly seeking its ideal

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of flowering, in all late winter and early spring days aspiring to become worthy of its rich relation the calla, it is fitting in me to make it my main business to seek that moral ideal which distinguishes me from a clambering creature of the Simian tribe. It is only as I know the First Cause, the Primal Force, in some practical vivid relationship to my own moral life, that I have any claim to manhood."

How much longer, my nephew would have gone on with his statement of reasons, I know not. Checking his career, I pointed him to the swift shifting lights on the Bay of Beauty. The delicate salmon-colored clouds which were reflected upon its glass-like surface, and the fine olive-green shades in the sky, we saw as if in a picture frame where we were lying upon the rocks,—looking through an opening in the foliage. Silently we watched the changing nightfall, maroon tints in the sky, ash upon the bay, and blood-red—a bright blood dulled a little by exposure to the air—over the city of Sa-

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lem; gazing long until the trees lost their outlines in the darkening west. In the presence of the Divine Artist, detected at His work, no human voice might interrupt Him or distract the observers, without seeming incoherent—like the cry of the screaming woman of Marblehead.

The celestial sights were followed by heavenly harmony of sound; but, for this, we went to that part of Foote's hill where Sunset Cottage stands,—not occupied so early in the season. Here we listened to the heavy fall of waves on the Old Neck beach; and through the silent chambers of the night, the sounding of the sea upon the fingerboards of other beaches and in the more distant coves. The configuration of the hills, the intervening valleys, and the woodlands, in this immediate neighborhood, so conduct the songs and instrumental tones of the sea as to give a resonance or slightly echoing sound,—making the orchestral effect fuller with its lingering melody than in any other locality in this vast music room. Here

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therefore we sat long, as if in a gallery, listening late to the harmonies that came floating in from the realms of the sea.

Nor did we make discord by conversation, but sat in silence, our souls attuned to lofty thoughts, the hour itself our season for worship. So it was made easy for my companion upon our homeward way, to pick up the thread of conversation where we had left it; although his words seemed now to be harsh and out of tune, and his imagery at fault, when compared with the painting and music of Nature.

“It is a paltry view to take of prayer and Bible services to look upon devotional hours as if one were telling beads. It is, in rational life, but the careful grounding of moral thought; discovering the fundamental relation of moral ideas to conduct. He who ever gets anywhere mentally, comes at last to read the mind of God in a four-fold revelation or none. Unless the Bible agrees with the Divine self-revelation in nature, in man’s moral constitution, and in human history, it is good

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for nothing. In my weekly hours of so-called devotion, I think over my studies of natural science and psychology and sociology; and I set the scripture texts face to face with God's own threefold commentary upon the Bible. And then I take what I get of solid four square truth, and I walk around it on every side; and examine it, and learn what it has to do with me personally. And I ask the great and mighty Source of Moral Light and Power to stand by me in my attempt to square my life by rule divine. Would you have me do less than this? Would you have me limit such business by a ten-minute rule? For my purposes in life, I would rather get a boy to turn a praying machine than do that."

When later in star-light hours, I paced up and down the railway piers at the harbor-draw, while Peter slept, I could but think of all I had taught him in his boyhood. Had I indeed engrafted upon his mind the thought of God, or rather had God's word fallen into his heart as a seed, of endless and infinite ex-

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pandering life? At the very outset, in student days, the various ailments incident to an ill-regulated physique had driven him much into the wilderness. Had he indeed found there the great Companion?

And when the mists of morning hid the stars, I was still pacing up and down in the dampness and darkness, as I re-examined my position. I used to think it necessary to pray by the hour, but afterwards I learned that it was necessary to pray by faith; and faith may as well be exercised in a second as to take a month for unbelief first. Still the grounds of all personal moral action are to be discovered only by thoughtful hours—not moments.

“Is it then possible,” I asked myself, “that my own life achievement would have been greater, if I had spent more time in abiding near the sources of spiritual life and power? And is there aught that can so rejuvenate my age as the attempt to be much in the company of the Eternal God?”

And what is to hinder my doing it? At

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my age the nights are like the days, and days like nights, since I have literally nothing to do but to follow the whim of the moment, whatever it is,—whether by undying youth to abide like a squirrel in the treetops, or walk the night in sight of the planets, or watch a week or two of sunrises from a hill by the sea. After meditating upon the Divine Artist and Master of Harmony until the day-dawn, I went to that elevation, so convenient to my house, Foote's hill; to which I am greatly attracted by certain dignified and majestic oaks, planted by the ancestors of my crowned and sceptred friend, a king and priest unto God, whose honored clerical service means so much to-day to those who found spiritual life in his ministrations.

How could I sleep till first I should number the wandering colors of the morning, and breathe the kindling air? To ascend a hilltop, and look out over the blue deep, like a sea-god,—this is what mornings are for.

XVIII

THE WHITE HILLS

THE next day we made our way to Ipswich, and took the Mountain train; having it in mind to foot it around the White Hills. We encountered a drizzling rain, which held on for several days. Peter and I held on, however, as long as the rain did; holding an itinerant camp-meeting under our two umbrellas. We advanced perhaps not more than two or three miles an hour, stopping now and then in a wayside barn or kitchen, and making a hundred miles or so, during a week.

Scarcely seeing a mountain, we did pass now and then the picturesque foot of some fair sized hill, whose body and head were wrapped in clouds. It was a compensation to us that we remembered mountains enough, seen elsewhere; and we easily drifted into an

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extended discussion of the relative merits of scenery, whether hilly heights or skipping waves. On the whole, I took my stand upon blue water, but Peter befriended the mountains.

“For my part,” I said, “I would give more for one league of rockbound coast than for the Rocky Mountain range at full length. I would nest with the sea mews rather than imprison myself within the deep and gloomy ravines I have often seen.”

To which he replied:—“When I have lived in the kettle bottoms or deep crag-lined pockets of a mountain range, or even upon the slopes where there was no distant outlook, I have never been enthusiastic. But dwelling at a sufficient distance from a fine range of peaks to soften their barren faces, and not so far as to lose the details of rugged crags and color, I have seen more astonishing displays of cloud and color-effects upon the mountains in three months, than in five years of sea-side pictures observed in almost daily walking. Nor do I speak at random,

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since during several years I watched the mountain day-dawn and sun-rising, and spent much time in gazing at sunsets. There is not the slightest doubt that from an artistic point of view the neighborhood of the mountains is more attractive than the ocean side."

"But this must be in a country where storms are short, and the atmosphere is usually clear save at sunrise and sunset?"

"That is true. Here, for instance, the mountains are relatively small, with broad spaces between them. And the fashionable resorts are not so located as to afford extended views of the entire group; we have detail too near to the eye, and we lack the panoramic effect of a great range. And the sea is so near as to keep the finest of these mountain views clouded in, for days together. Then, too, if we journey to the Pacific northwest, it is common there for tourists to come and go without seeing a mountain; the vast ranges being hidden by winter fog or summer smoke. The Sierras, the

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Wind River mountains, and the Rockies are more happily situated."

"Certain it is, Peter, that here the best views are upon days relatively rare, and observed by residents rather than visitors."

"The tourist months are short; and even if those who come and go, get good air and a change from the coast line or prairie scenery, they really know nothing about the mountains."

"The finest effects," I said, "are noticed in the late autumn and winter, when the tourists are caged in cities; nor do the local farmers or villagers make a note of the transcendent beauty of the mountains, which seem to be alive through swiftly varied color in changing seasons. The astonishing transformations in the mountain forest and in the tones of sky and cloud, are little known."

"It is then little wonder that our eastern sea bears off the palm of praise when compared with these hills, since there we have so many resident painters and poets."

It took us three days of sturdy agitation

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to beat sufficiently this question of comparative merit between the mountains and the sea. I rehearsed with much detail and careful word-painting the marine pictures I had seen in favored years on Cape Anne; and Peter made me envy his eyes and his memory by portraying the details of rising day and falling night in the Rocky Mountains, which he recalled so vividly as to suggest a painter's studio.

Naturally enough, for three days more we traversed every point of practical relationship between the creative Divine Spirit and such human spirits as are open and hospitable to heavenly visitation. And we agreed that the experience of the Spirit's power answers to the subject of it, as a practical settlement of all doubts and questionings.

"It is," my companion said, "my Childhood Dream to be crowded with celestial company, to entertain the Holy One, and to be to Him what a man's hand is to a man."

"In these modern days," I asked, "when there ought to be clear thinking and state-

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ments that are not mystical, is it true that theology is more at fault than chemistry and physics? Is not the science that relates to God Himself as well bottomed as that which relates to His physical methods of working? Does not cosmogony fall back ultimately on a will-power somewhere, in Some One? Whatever be the subtle material activity, is there not behind it, that Primal Force with which natural science brings us face to face?"

"Do we say that Magnetic Force effects that crystalline structure which characterizes solid bodies, polarizing and grouping the particles or molecules of iron in a mass? Do we say that cohesion is probably nothing else than an effect of magnetic force? Do we say that this magnetic force is behind gravitation? We say then that this mysterious force is not unlike life; that it is a power related to matter as the soul of man is related to his body, and that it is as incapable of further analysis as the will of God is. So far as science can judge, it is the expression of the

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will of God who is the ultimate Presence and First Cause in Nature. May not then the common scriptural affirmation be true, that the Spirit of God is efficiently related to man's spirit? And if this is true, then duty and prayer shall be the watchwords of my life."

"Was it not Faraday," I asked, "who deemed it an extraordinary thing that a man, with mind so wonderful that there is nothing to compare with it elsewhere in the known creation, should leave his mind to run wild in its highest elements and qualities? Now if this be extraordinary in respect to the cultivation of man's judgment and reasoning faculties, how much more is it to be said of him who neglects to gain the highest power attainable on earth, by placing his mind in such an attitude as to receive spiritual energy by the indwelling of the Almighty?"

"A sunbeam is no more manifest when it illuminates matter than is the Divine Spirit manifest when the spirit of a man is changed into the divine likeness."

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“Will not God hold in everlasting remembrance those obscure men, who, when they were upon the earth, were hospitable toward His Spirit, who were emulous of gaining the divine honor? He will remember them forever, even though our swiftly changing generations speedily forgot their names.”

“Their fame indeed will never die, who are known to God.”

“Is it not then a beautiful Dream, in the earthly childhood of the soul, to win the power divine by being hospitable to God indwelling?”

“No man, then, shall call me dreamy and mystical, if I take time enough, day by day, to find out God.”

Never dry nor fairly flat was our conversation in those moist walking days up and down the interminable hills of northern New Hampshire. When the weather finally did clear up, we agreed that the beauty of the New England hill scenery makes ample compensation for the relative flatness of the country when compared with the mighty moun-

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tain masses of other regions. The sunny uplands with their groves of varied foliage; the broad undulating valleys; the narrow meadows; the sparkling streams, fringed with maples; the rounded elevations, which rise to some height, and which are dignified by the name of mountains; the enormous bases and bulk of certain peaks with steep sides and deep ravines; and sundry sharp rocky faces, with now and then a pinnacle,—all this, and the cool nights, and bracing air, the early frosts and the glory of the autumn woods, may well attract the tourists of all the world, even if there is a lack of massive grandeur or if one misses the reign of savage winter at the summer solstice upon inaccessible peaks.

We did well therefore to prolong our walking from a week to a month; wandering hither and yon, as the fancy pleased us. Conscious as I was of some slight falling off in mental force, although with no loss of physical vigor, in my years so far past life's meridian, I could but admire the indomitable

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vitality of my companion, the incalculable fires within which kept his heart at a steady heat. The faith and purpose and push of early manhood reappeared morning by morning in all his advancing years. In his upward, onward course, every to-morrow found him at a point beyond the ken of yesterday.

I could but think over the varied definitions of genius by men of genius, and that of John Foster pleased me best,—the power of kindling one's own fire. Is there then, I asked, no antidote for age? Can I taste already, in this life, the fount of God? May the immortal destiny begin here and now? Can I, in feeling, shake off my flesh and keep in touch with Primal Force? Is there no widening consciousness, no blaze of fires divine, no spiritual refinement like that which visits the sons of the morning, the radiant children of an endless day? To me, my library seemed empty, and the company of men lacking in the delicate sensibility which characterizes that intimate companionship which I

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find most inspiring. My coarse and external contact with earthly life has left me, I said, with unutterable longings for intercourse with superior beings. Is there then, for me, Divine illumination? If the Great Companion is within hail of my voice, shall I not make it the business of my life to find Him? This, I said, is at least a beautiful Dream.

XIX

AN AIRY PYRAMID.

UPON this dog-day morning, we walked the early hours shrouded in mist. Once the clouds suddenly opened and the head of Lafayette looked out from a background of blue; then the shifting mists concealed it. This ecstatic vision accorded well with the tenor of our thoughts and words as we followed a veiled path through meadows, seeking for the light as plants for the sun.

“Is there not a ground swell of the sea, an undulating movement of a myriad leagues of surface, as distinguished from the dash of individual waves? So,” I said, “there is a ground tone of the human soul, the will, the purpose, which we distinguish from single impulses or acts. I desire most of all that

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in its pulsation the ground tone of my life may be in unison with God."

"Is it not life at its ideal when we are on the same plane with Him?"

"It is so that we rise above ourselves, and receive new life from the Life Infinite."

"I will daily compare myself with Him, and gauge my daily relations to the Ideal character which He has revealed; in place of measuring myself with the frail and the finite."

"Do you then belittle the Infinite, and compare yourself with a finite God?"

"How can we know the Infinite except through the limitations He has Himself set in revealing himself in nature, and in man, and in human history, and in the Bible story? As to his moral attributes, is not Jesus Christ the only God we know, and the only standard to measure by? In him I can accurately measure the Infinite by an Infinite standard, as to moral life.

"Do dry dogmatic formulas, relating to the scientific Idea of God, offer to struggling

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humanity the intense and irresistible attraction of a Divine Life dwelling among us? ”

“ If the finite soul hungers after the Infinite, it is because it is made so.”

We slept that night, and the night following, upon the top of the mountain. Is there then but one mountain in the range?

It was a night of snow and frost. But the first evening and first morning gave us matchless cloud views, the vapor hanging like a gigantic fleece over all the hillsides. The low afternoon sun shone down through rifts into the green vales below. Could we ever weary of beauty in the making?

“ I wearied of my early home on the Cape, before I left it,” said Peter, as we sat upon the rocks looking out over the illuminated leagues of cloud; “ and I wearied of that part of the Rocky Mountains with which I was most familiar, before I left it. Is it not true that little by little we may tire even of the finest scenery, and long for fresh fields and pastures new wherein to re-create the spirit? And by and by we tire of this globe, and seek

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the home of God, and liberty to roam through the universe. Amid the works of the Infinite hand, and in the study of the Infinite character, we may find fit employment forever, and rest in resting not."

"Is not this the reason: that God is the soul's Ideal, standing in that mystery which no mortal science can penetrate; God, the Dream of youth and age; God, whom we seek with endless quest, until we find Him?"

"Is not man himself so far above nature as to look down upon it all, even the mysterious cosmic laws, as we do now upon these cloud banks?"

"To me nature offers no permanent repose,—the sea loses its charms, the mountains fail to arouse the spirit, and the forests wave in vain; if there be no companionship with my Maker, I shall cease not to wander restless and weary. For what is the physical world but a picture gallery, that awakens our visions of an ideal beauty, and an elevating sense of companionship with the Artist?"

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“Do you mean to say, that there will come to us a day so sad, that we shall be unaffected by the grandest sights upon this globe? When we shall not think to admire the expanse and inexhaustible power of the ocean? When we shall not heed the presence of snow-clad mountains on the horizon, or mighty peaks frowning over us?”

“Yea, we can forget it all; as now we sometimes pass, unheeding, the love of God.”

“Let us say then that there will be a happy forgetfulness, when the inspiration derived from the grandeur of our globe and from the highest spiritual truths will be wrought into the soul itself, so that we shall come at last to have mountains and seas and Bibles within?”

“So only shall we enter into the height and the depth of the excellency of the knowledge of God.”

“Suppose, to-day, that we forget the mountains and the sea, and the very text which expresses our creed concerning God?”

“If so, it is better, if we are at one with

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Him, having the same desires, the same will, the same plans, concerning earth and heaven."

"If we forget the words of truth, or forms in nature, is it not because they inadequately express our ideal of truth or beauty?"

Then, in the early night, we slept; and in later hours walked abroad under the frosty star-light, and later still amid squally snow-flakes.

And there upon the mountain top, far up-lifted toward the stars, we recited page after page of the Vedic hymns, the pathetic outcry of ancient ages seeking after God.

"Have all the ages, all the sages, man at his best, been at fault in seeking God?"

"Is there no living quickening Spirit, through which the moral nature of man expands and grows like a plant in the sun?"

"Do lower creatures seek for a higher life? Is nature but one form of God's word to voice our inexpressible longing for another kind, or rank, or order of life? What

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is nature but an aspiration? What is man but a moral evolution? ”

“ I am tired of comparing myself with myself, or seeking to match my mates. What am I but an earth worm, unless there is for me an Infinite companionship? ”

“ So our unending life has earthly beginning, in its aspiration and service. Nor can we be but restless until we have established eternal relations with the Source and Sustainer of our Spirits.”

“ He who made every plant to have seed in itself, has given to the finite soul a vital seed, which in blooming points toward the Infinite splendor, and only dies to the earth to live forever.”

“ He who was once my hope, is now my Friend. Nor can I any more forget my early Dream of an Infinite Friendship than I can lose my identity. For it I wait, as for the day-dawn.”

“ I would as soon load all the world's ships with sand and try to fill the depths of the middle sea, as seek to still the crying and

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fill the hungering of the human soul with aught else than God."

"Without God, what is life but a wandering wind wailing through the darkness?"

The sun at his rising projected the shadow of our mountain across the hills and valleys out upon the sky itself westward, far above the horizon like an airy pyramid, like a mountain leaning on the sky or posing as one of the pillars of heaven. And at night-fall, amid all the pageantry of crimson and gold in the west, we looked to the east; and there, above the horizon line, stood our airy pyramid,—the solemn shadow of the mountain projected by the setting sun against the eastern sky. In the presence of this magic mountain how could we but feel our personal insignificance, as if we had been but the butterflies that sunned their wings on the noon-day ledges? And when the golden day gave place to the glittering gold of countless stars, how could we but liken ourselves to two fireflies seeking to dissipate the night by flitting across a meadow?

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"What do the fireflies know of God?"

All through that shining day, and far into that spangled night, we talked of that Light which kindles the fires of the sun, and which fills the flickering stars.

"I am glad to have a warm hearted Bible, glowing with personal promise and affection, a book so intensely alive as to throb with the Infinite heart-beats. The Hebrew hymns are individual. The lyrist is alone with God, at face to face."

"And is not this more inspiriting to us than a pulseless natural theology?"

"If the Creator of the ends of the earth represents Himself as the Bridegroom of the soul, I will seek to stand at his side."

"Will the Infinite bespeak us kindly? 'I have called you not servants but friends.'"

"The moral covenant," said my comrade, "is not a cold, rigid, mechanical, legal document prepared by a heartless Lawgiver; but psalm and prophecy and a suffering Incarnation outbreathing in pathetic and musical

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numbers an Infinite personal affection for me and mine."

"Not in this life will I miss these words."

"It was when I read your story, O noble kinsman, of my kinsman's life, recorded first for me, that I learned the exultant life of finding God in common wood-paths. Forever thenceforth it made my heart thrill to enter the forest roads, knowing that I was then alone with God."

"O child of my adoption, it is true that as a vast river or a mountain range courses through many petty states, this thought of solitary communion with God ran through every chapter of his life."

"In all woodland wanderings, I have never found a summer grove so full of song as my own heart has always been of joy celestial."

"The earth so vies with heaven."

"Whether I am ill or in bounding health, watching at deathbeds or busy with great cares, in city or desert, at the salted coast or

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amid the fragrant mountains, I am always alone with God."

"In the solitary glen or the crowded street, I find Him whom my soul loveth."

"In the car or the coach, or as I sail the seas, my God is with me, crowding out the thought of other company."

"So Saadi has said: When the king asked 'Do you think of me?' 'Yes,' replied the seer, when I forget God.'"

"Your life, you often say, O kinsman beloved, has sunk like a stone in the sea, without a ripple. But I would give my life, if, as you have done for my life, I too could persuade but one friend, for the joy that is set before him, to live in earth's secluded ways, the better to find leisure for being much alone with God."

"Would you, for this, tear down the walls of your own secret life?"

"I do not know."

"With few professional associates, do you seek the solitary life of a small community

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that you may better gain the Divine companionship?"

"It is rather in the crowded life of great populations, that he is oft in solitude, who is satisfied with nothing else than communion with God. To be alone with God is desert, and hermitage."

"Let us agree then that the detailed attempts and achievements of life are for this or for that; but what is the life itself for?"

"To partake of the divine nature."

"With what thoughts would you haunt the house and field?"

"For days together, for life's duration, I would be so crowded by celestial company as to be unable to keep God from being in all my thoughts; His Presence cheering my hours of sorrow, and giving such an intelligent and holy joy as to make me impatient for that state, in which, during untold centuries, I may engage in silent and solitary study of the knowledge of God."

It was towards morning, after the snow squall, in an hour of dense darkness, that I

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heard my companion's voice from a cleft in the rocks just before I sought repose:—

“It is never the sun, never the sea, never the prairie, never the invigorating breath of the mountains,—these do not make me glad; but Thou art my Light. I here behold parts of Thy ways, and here Thy beauty; and Thou dost hedge me about, before and behind, like the all pervading air. In Thee alone I live and move. O Dream, O Joy of my manhood, Thou Great Companion of my soul, let me repose in Thine arms; and, waking, find myself still with Thee.”

XX

THE NORTHERN POLE

WHEN we walked down the mountain, we interchanged views of the philosophy of life with the charcoal burners at timber line. There is no doubt from what they said, that solitude, whether or not it be peopled with heavenly visitants, tends to a pronounced individuality of life.

Nor could there be doubt, from what Peter said, that he believed the slightest attempt to be much alone with God would so emphasize individual characteristics as to result in a unique experience, if not a mission clearly made known in solitary haunts.

Still, I was little prepared for his readiness to enter at once upon a mission so foreign to my tastes, and so in accord with his, as that he took within the hour.

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Every inch a missionary, he was as ready to go to the north pole as to the equator, to barbarian as to Greek. So that when we met the Secretary of the Domestic Missionary Society of British North America at the Glen House, who told a pitiable story of the Indian hunters in the Slave Lake country, my Nephew at once offered to go and make the experiment, during five years at least, to see whether their condition might be improved.

Nor was this move ill considered or quixotic. "I have," he said, "like Luther of old, made many fine plans for the Lord, and He would have none of them. Long since, therefore, I made up my mind that I would not limit His working through me by conscious choice of my own; but do His will, whatever it is, just as I find it. I have taken to myself the seal of the Genevan reformer; and I hold out in my hand to God my flaming heart.

"Our Master," he added, "did not spend himself in book-making, but in self-sacrifice

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for the needy. No sweet contemplation of divine things, no ecstatic vision, is of so great value as the humblest deed by which we may serve human want. And I should feel like a skulker, if I were to stay here to balance sentences, in writing artistic and pious books, when there are pagans who need me rather than some one else."

So this missionary to the Lone North Land counted it an honor to lay aside his ambitions, and follow the providential call of the hour.

Although I could but think it a mistake on his part, yet it was a great privilege that I could make it easy for him to go, by establishing his family at Northampton and caring for their schooling. This was really but paying my debt due to his household, upon grounds well known to me.

Of Peter's journey over the Great Northern Packet, dog-sledging a thousand miles toward the pole, delightful accounts came to me: his letters tinkling with dog bells on rumbling roads of ice; and in them I felt

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the ceaseless arctic air-current, sweeping the flat and frozen leagues of unpeopled wastes; and with him I looked upon the wrinkled snow plains, in the small hours under the shivering crescent.

With him I lived in the glacial age returned. The wood buffalo of Athabasca, the moose upon the banks of the river of Peace, the caribou of the barren grounds—I followed them all with Peter and his hunting tribe the “Beavers.” Upon the Great Fish River, the Garry Lake, and Inlet Chesterfield I dwelt with Peter and his wild parishioners, who lived like wolves following their game, moving with the wandering deer, living where lived the herds. Over three hundred thousand square miles, roamed this hunting church,—in search of peltry and carnal food, partaking meantime of such crumbs of the bread of life as their missionary could make palatable to their wild appetites.

All this seized upon my imagination, and my mind constantly recurred to the musk-ox country: with its summer night of two

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hours, and wintry night of twenty-two with aural arch carmine and yellow corruscating in a thousand flashes high toward the zenith; a country treeless over an area half as large as France,—a flat and ocean-like expanse touched along its crested drifts by golden light, glancing snow-billows interminable; a land with steaming fog of inland lakes or Arctic sea; a land of limitless lichen ledges and mossy forests on the lake borders—the summer and winter feed so scant: a land of hunger, and perpetual threat of famine which oft puts out the internal fires of its wandering inhabitants, so that they die without sign as the wolves do. Orion and the constellations look down upon the stark hunters, as they did in unrecorded generations of man primeval.

Upon moccasin soup lived Peter; yet silent and heroic was he, making no mention of incidents so insignificant as the going without food for a fortnight, or giving tribute of sundry bites of one limb after another to the Frost King, whose domain he had invaded.

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Man can live on little, he wrote; and hunger is little noticeable after forty-eight hours. Unique was his nineteenth century life among these primitive tribes, as if he had been a dweller in a past geological age, the reign of ice; and in it, he reported a certain fascination outside his calling, which held him to his work.

Then too, the work itself was rewarding. So many men of early type gave credible evidence of attempting to gain and maintain a rightful attitude toward God and their fellows, that my Nephew's success in this respect was far greater than my own ministration had been upon Cape Anne, where my popular religious advice had been commonly shed off like water from a duck's back.

There was no part of Peter's somewhat voluminous religious diary, which later came into my hands, that so appealed to my imagination as the record of those lonely hours in which he sought to "walk with God", under the frozen moon of the wild and desolate north.

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It was after he had so walked and labored during four years, that I received a letter from the Mission Secretary, telling me that the Master had come to call the missionary, and that he had gone to be with Him where He is.

Notwithstanding this report, Peter returned a few months later, as one coming back from the dead.

XXI

“LOOKING BACKWARD”

TO Peter, upon his return, it was the most diverting part of this serio-comical ending of his mission, that I'd had privately printed, and had circulated among his personal friends, such parts of his biography as I thought most interesting; discharging in it a debt due from me to his memory.

This pamphlet bore the title “Looking Backward”; a title made so famous by Mr. Edward Bellamy's remarkable exhibit of possible improvements in society. If any reader will look backward at Peter's life, some ten years before his ministry in Hollyhock and Moderation, he will best do it by thinking of my Nephew at this present period of my story as being in another realm of life;

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as I myself thought, at the time when I wrote this part of his biography.

The prelude of my pamphlet related to Peter's individuality of life, and his sense of a mission from the Master. In fact I had so shaped his life before he was fifteen years old, that his early maturity was given to religious pioneering upon the western border, with such singular self-devotement and lack of looking to his own material interests that his life was little else than leading a forlorn hope in a matchless situation and hour of opportunity. He had at first little backing, aside from his own backbone and a sanguine faith. To this work he gave some years of hue and cry for the love of God; and in it he reached a fair measure of success.

Yet in his youth, when I gave such careful attention to developing in him an unselfish spirit, I gave no thought to his forming wise business habits, so needful for commending his work to men of good judgment. This defect in his training, for which I was to blame, was scarcely noticeable for a limited

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time in small affairs. But when he extended his work, and there came years of general financial depression, this lack of snug and prudent habits on his part failed to keep the confidence of those sagacious business men who had aided his work at its inception and had helped him carry it. So that when his health failed by overwork and he was compelled to slack a little in his ceaseless diligence, disaster instantly overtook his affairs.

These points, in detail, I enlarged upon in my pamphlet "Looking Backward"; and in detail, with the utmost frankness, I was swift to take on myself a large share of the blame; and, in view of his recent death, I stated Peter's foibles as charitably as I could.

For the present purpose I allude to this matter only so far as it relates to the leading Dream of Peter's life,—to find out God, to walk with Him, to lean upon Him in life's hard ways. Impracticable dreamer that he was, in some respects, I can but take a certain poetical or artistic interest in his earthly attitude toward celestial life and light. Looking

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at it from this standpoint, I was glad to find that his religious diary in all these years of hoping, achieving, and failing, was but a series of pictures displayed between the low earth and the high heavens: a picture gallery adorned by majestic mountains, forests wild, and the shining sea; a gallery resounding with the gentle whisperings of love and devotion, or the strong crying of great needs, or the triumphant songs of faith.

XXII

A BUNDLE OF BOOKS

THE very day on which Peter returned from that realm of dead missionaries, the desolate north, I received at my home on Cape Anne, a package of books from Queen at Northampton; and to examine them, I went to the fastnesses of the autumnal forest. No golden street in the New Jerusalem can be more to me than the wood-road I took that day from Baker's sawmill to the Prophet's Mountain.

I went through it upon the back of Sancho Panza. Greatly to his delight, the road is hedged by undergrowth close to the path. Loitering along the way, he would pause and smell at the moosewood, with its beautiful lines of purple and green along the veins of leaf so broad; and then my fastidious squire,

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finding this shrub to be little to his mind, would turn his attention to tearing in pieces with his left forefoot a decayed pine stump. And I meantime stood at bridle length, inspecting the quality of a green velvet robe thrown over a rotten log. My main point in riding was to walk, and lead the horse; not else could I gather the honey-dew, the meadow beauty, the sweet pepper, and the flowering fern. I did not care, indeed, to gather them; but I made sure that my wood-road treasures were all there, to be counted every time I saw them, as a miser his money. In these early September days I searched sharply for the wild strawberry as if for fruit; and foolishly and fondly fingered the blackberry both high and the low. I gazed on the patches of blueberry bush, or the huckleberry of so brilliant a red, and feasted my eyes on the ivy and bunch plum leaves; and I nibbled as when a boy the seeds of sweet fern. I lingered even at loose strife, or the false Solomon's seal, the water hoarhound, the boneset, the hardhack, the tear-thumb.

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It would have been a shame in me to pass these old-time neighbors without salutation.

If Sancho scorned the horse-briar, he scented the sassafras whose roots I took to lunch on. Under arching beech and pine we traversed an aisle of a hundred feet upon a carpeted floor of mingled stems of pine and ashy leaves, with here and there a decaying branch; and little beeches three or four inches high were sparsely springing, or an adventuresome partridge berry. And upcropping in the aisle were a few stones clad in grey or green; and the sunlight shone through the leaves above, to fleck the floor with dancing beams. My wandering eyes looked out on the wide reaching floor of the forest, its ever changing grade of slightly undulating vales and hills in miniature. Along the road, were varied forms of stony seats and couches lined with particolored lichen; or rocky fragments covered by a light growth of delicate white; or big boulders heavily soiled with mat of decayed hemlock spray, and green with brakes or thick with moss; and now

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and then some isolated mass of rock stood in the low lands, at a level slightly above the surrounding soil, which had been degraded by ages of rising and falling water.

And I listened long to the low singing of the brooklet. At the stream crossing, flamed the cardinal flower; and fern stalls of six feet nodded in bending grace. I stood long by a great beech to note the fresco work of minute lichens, dark and light in broken rings; and the trunks of spruce and pine and maple around me were marked by these paintings of the forest. Now and then my horse put tooth to the rank grass that sprang from seeds which had been scattered there five winters ago at logging feed,—four or five varieties of cultivated grasses. Here, by shelving rocks, the choppers had their camp-fire dinners twenty years since. The growth of young walnuts, or maple shrubs with scarlet leaf stems, or dense thickets of young pines with their dying lower limbs,—these mark by size the passing years; so long, or so long ago, the axe was here.

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This forest is in perpetual renewal. Everywhere there are two-leaved maples three inches high, or ten-leaved at fifteen inches; an infant forest in noiseless cradle. Beech shrubs four feet high thrust limbs three feet wide and four feet long into my path. Baby oaks, of eighteen inches, bear leaves four inches by seven. The trees are always surprising, by arms thrust out at angles unlooked for. Tall oaks and maples fish by dangling limbs for unwary horsemen. At rare intervals a creeper lets down a loop like a rope,—fallen from fallen limb. Here is a hemlock as large as I can gird in both arms, with its dark body tasseled by moss which is nourished by the dampness of the soil below; the tree forking into twin trunks six feet from the ground, with no limbs on the inside. There are seven varieties of oak in these woods. And all the land is before me; whither it seemeth good and convenient for me to go, I go,—to find a new oak or gaze at the hornbeam in color. Here rise the great pines from eighty to a hundred feet; if small,

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appearing tall by contrast with lower ranks. All the land, indeed, before me, through ancient paths leading hither and thither; sometimes straight away with high arched limbs, through which Sancho races at less than a mile a minute.

It seemed almost wicked for me to open the bundle of books I brought with me; they meant so much to him who first perused them, often in this very forest. I opened them upon that great boulder which is related to Peter's pioneer work as Plymouth rock is to New England; standing once in sacred secret grove, it is now glaring in the sun amid a waste of sprout-land.

I could but grimly smile, on opening these pocket editions of devotional books, to find several entries, on inside covers or fly leaves, of a fresh dedication of his life to his pioneer enterprise; written, perhaps, in his Scotch covenanter blood,—as if the blood of after martyrdom. His indeed, were days of fire and blood; and he was the man to kneel at a flat tomb-stone table, and scrawl his name,

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and raise his hand to heaven, and dedicate his life to duties, heroic if common. What are these, I asked, but the high-water marks of a great and all absorbing enthusiasm, to risk all in laying the deep foundations.

I opened book after book, and book after book, during twenty years thumbed till tattered, or marked till no text was fresh; the words of divine promise, or the sayings of our Lord. To heart he had taken them in all these hard years. Quarrel indeed would I with Peter. Had he believed this word and lost it? Had he lost it? This would I ask, at our next meeting, in realms afar, unknown.

Here, in these books, were the maps Peter prayed over, seeking to carry the world to God: "Thy Kingdom come." Here, too the dates of great days of crying unto God. Here were witnesses, fragments of beach grass torn from some high sand dune, or here a bit of witnessing moss or tender leaf of beech or aspen, bleached brakes from out these woodlands, fragments of fir from the

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Rocky mountains, or dried buds from the side of the sea. Here were the texts of personal relation between God and the penitent. He ran to the name of the Lord as to a tower, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High; inwardly he set the Lord always before him; to the heavenly hills his eyes were uplifted; his blind eyes he bore to God for healing; to Him who upbraideth not, who mentioneth not, he bore his oft infirmities,—“It is by my infirmities that I am held to God.”

The markings upon the margins that were most decided and most frequent were those that marked all prayers for wisdom, for God's instructing—His guiding eye and counsel; “thine ears shall hear a word behind thee—This is the way, walk ye in it.” High courage in God, appeal to the power of the everlasting arms, the never forsaking God,—these were the texts that stood by him. Feeling after Him, he found Him; and sat under His shadow, with songs of joy.

To Him who is pitiful he cried,—“Be

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Thou my guest, O Saviour of men, and I will cease not to wash Thy feet with my tears."

Intensely real to him was the Presence of the heavenly Friend; to him a privilege above the honor bestowed on prophets and kings.

But before I had looked over half the books, I became very weary of it all; so much to him, so little to me. The very intensity of his life became to me monotonous; these endless consecrations, fiery petitions, soul-heaving ecstasies, wearied me,—as if I had been out late witnessing a spiritual Fourth of July celebration of explosives and erratic fires. I longed to sleep in Moderation, and have him sleep.

It was, however, to me a great refreshment when I passed to the Psalm book he used in days of disaster. There is a vast amount of human nature in the Psalms, and the Old Man Peter knew them all by heart. It appeared from his markings that David had just such a time as fell to the pioneer Peter; and he showed a good deal of fight over it,

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and was not nearly so meek toward men as towards God. I was rather glad of it, for a change-off.

At the particular minute when I closed this book, I saw Peter at the foot of the boulder, as one risen from the dead.

XXIII

THE CAPE ANNE TRIBUNAL

WHEN we reached my house, and late when we buried the evening fire, I said,—“Now that I’ve caught you alive Peter, and upon a globe where we still talk English, I wish to ask you what perplexes me: How came all your pioneer prayers to be wasted?”

“It is said that after death is the Judgment. Shall we then to-morrow arraign God?”

“The theologians say, that one great use of the Judgment Day is to justify the ways of God before the universe. Shall we, then, try Him?”

“Let us first arraign ourselves, and stand accused.”

“I am in part to blame, Peter, if your prayers miscarried.”

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“Not so much as I. It is I who hindered them.”

“Shall we then give over our thought, to arraign our Maker?”

“We fall in the dust before Him, making to Him confession.”

It is commonly said by those who hold to a spectacular Judgment Day, like that represented in our Lord's parables of the Judgment, that it will be protracted through a long period of time. When therefore Peter and I undertook to pass judgment on ourselves in anticipation of our final award, we made sure to walk and talk for many days, by the shores of the autumn sea. Peter's home was at my house for some months, so that we prolonged our mundane judgment day: making the most of winter water, or east winds of springtime; and then far into dog-days, we never ceased to call upon our souls to judge justly between ourselves and God.

Our notion of coast following in the late autumn days and in mid-winter, was based

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on Peter's fear lest he suffer from change of climate,—newcomer as he was from the frigid zone. Whenever it stormed, he dragged me hither and yon, as much to my joy as his; so that I might share with him the exultant life of the north country minimized by such caricature of winter as visited Cape Anne.

Instead of the sound of a trumpet, calling to a dread tribunal, we heard the sea beating upon blissful shores.

"You do not believe, Peter, that there will be no more sea in the life everlasting?"

"No more wrecks or sorrow; but if there were literally no more sea, the music loving angels would come to this ridge upon the cool nights of Indian summer; and listen to the fall of breakers upon these beaches, and the voice of these resounding rocks a little inland."

"If I were an angel, I would learn to manipulate the sea,—fingering all the beaches on all shores, until I could find a little dell like this at our feet which carries the tuneful

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notes along the echoing hillsides; and there I'd build a booth and spend eternity."

"You'd establish yourself no doubt, upon the site of this Sundown Lodge."

The sea, the sea, the trumpet-calling sea—we heard it by night and by day, the Voice of God.

It was one October morning that I sprang out of bed long before daylight, and called Peter: "O child of gleeful years, let us pickle ourselves all day. Already I sniff the brine of a myriad waves. The breath from off the sea is salt enough to preserve us for many years."

When therefore it was day-dawn we were already pacing up and down the wide beach by the still sea, to note the changing lights of the morning as they glanced over the vast mirror that filled half the horizon. We seated ourselves upon a lofty headland, to watch the play of the purples, the greens, the dappling shadows. The slightest breath of a breeze cast a net over the waters, in measureless meshes so delicate as not to disturb the color.

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"To untie this life's tangle," I said, "will be fit business in the Paradise unending to which we hasten."

"No, not for my part. I shall then care no more for it than I do now for my tangled cod lines off Pickett's Point twenty years ago. It is, however, a business good enough for a paradise of low order, like this we're in now. What strange providence, then, have you encountered, that you want to have solved like a riddle on this rock?"

"I hope you have no fault to find with this light-hearted, bright and cheery paradise, which we dwell in at this moment?"

"If we deserve no better, I will take this, and be thankful."

Finding first a cosy corner for coffee, we lingered long at our breakfast fire. It was an altar of tribunal, upon which we offered ourselves as if for trial by fire.

"Is God's judgment," I asked, "likely to be very different from that of our own moral sense? Do I not sentence myself at the bar of my own conscience?"

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"The Jove I worship with his shafts of light, can be no swifter than I to transfix my own ill-thought or act. It is as if I were at sea taking soundings: I cast a lead into the depths of my heart. And then I set in order all my faults."

"If books are to be opened in worlds on high, let us find them and face them now. I am hale and knurly still; and I would rather review my life here on these high rocks overhanging Graves' beach than wait till I sit in heavenly places in a world unknown."

"You prefer, doubtless, a rambling kind of a judgment day, without chronological orderliness, or logical sequence?"

"Yes. Nor would I here and now formulate a conclusion, or pass the sentence. Let Infinite Wisdom do that,"

We then walked the cathedral woods, once blest by a poet's rambling, treading softly, with measured if not melodious feet, over the flecks of sunlight on the carpet of pine needles or yellow leaves. Returning to the heights, we bespoke, in gentle accents, the

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plumes of golden-rod among the broken boulders; and here we set up our tribunal. The juniper so tough and wide spreading, the sweet briar so green and thorny, the low oaks with the vigor of early settlers, the cedar so fragrant, and the stalwart pines lifting their hearts heavenward, the lichens slowly crumbling away the ledges, little rugged pitch-pines grasping with virile root minute foothold amid patches of soil inhospitable with broken stones, the distant hills across the bay, the forests beyond the shining water, picturesque islets and rugged headlands, and the autumn sun over all,—how cheery the place, how happy the hour, for facing life's grim record, as face we must—to be with ourselves at peace.

“If we are to have a judgment day, Peter, let us pray that it may be here in Manchester-by-the-sea.”

“Unless we here are judged, we never shall be; already here is the beginning of life unending, or here we reap the death we have sown.”

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"There are men in this town to-day, whose companionship is hell."

"I never read or dreamed of perdition worse to me than life without God, here and now. Is not he condemned already who knows not God?"

"Let us to-day call ourselves but back-numbers of the world's press, a last month's daily; our life of earth gone by."

"Shall we say then that we have emigrated to other spheres?"

"To-day we are in another world."

"To-day all our planetary life is behind us; and we are now in a different sphere of our Father's House."

"Tell me, then, are all the Dreams of your Youth forgotten?"

"Earth's sleep is over, my Dreams abide."

"What was your Dream?"

"It was always life's ideal to forget things behind, and press forward."

"In an unending career."

"If I have learned my former life's lesson, and to do ill or well its petty business, why

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should I spend myself now in ceaselessly reviewing the vulgar fractions of a school I have quit forever?"

"Let the staging fall, if the building is done."

"But I blundered much at my examples, and my teachers were some days cross to me."

"To some I gave occasion to be cross, when I was in my cradle."

"Will they never forget it?"

"I can imagine that the damned have little to do but rehearse the grudges of by-gone years."

"It is fit business for lost spirits."

"Devout men, who have viewed the truth from differing standpoints, will, on reaching heaven, spend the first half hour in looking at each other sidewise, and rubbing up their eyesight, and cooling their hot heads, and filling their hearts with charity."

"If they would do that before they get there, it would make the earth more heavenly."

XXIV

A CONFESSIONAL

“**I**F our judgment day were trifling, here on this sunny shelf in a golden day,” I said, as a little later we sat upon a tongue of rock thrust into the sea eastward of the Kettle crevice, “I should frankly own my faults to you, my grim confessor. And first, I confess myself a conceited old idiot; with smirking self-complacency contrasting myself, and even my phrases and very thoughts, with all the world. Is it not, known to you, Peter, that we two are like Quaker mates: ‘All the world is queer but me and thee, and thee is a little queer?’ Yet this world would have a poor show in our general judgment, if the most were like me; for you know that even on theology I am at odds, if not a heretic.”

“But your heresies are harmless; they

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only impart a nutty flavor to your preaching, like noxious insects dried and powdered and stirred into wine."

"Then, too, I am disproportioned in character. Years ago I made up my mind, that by nature I had an excess of modesty. And of wisdom I have altogether too much; to me it is a natural growth, as fruit is found in the blossom. I cannot help it. If now and then I could be conscious of having sometimes made a mistake, it would be a wholesome reflection. This having so much wisdom is the bane of my life."

To this sally Peter surprised me by making no reply. He must have thought I had told the truth in serious jesting. He only rose and stood upright, stiff as a main mast. Then he stretched his arms, and yawned wide as the Sharks-mouth rocks: "I believe, Uncle, that we arose very early this morning."

By this time the tide had begun to sweep the sandspit that sometimes bridges the space between the beach and Graves' island. Ju-

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diciously wading, we reached that cleft which looks down the coast toward Crow island; and there we spent the day without once asking for a sun-dial. Every portion of that day was like eternity in its passing, unmarked. Sheltered from the air currents, we had flat-rock sunshine or cliff shadow at will. We slept to the tune of rippling water, or lunched not far from noisy sea birds.

“If the ways of God are to you justified in the development of your life, is it not as well as if there were a formal hour for trial?”

“The thunder peal of personal judgment I first hear within. What comes next, who cares?”

“He indeed has tasted of the second death whose conscience condemns him not. He is of God condemned already, if not already executed.”

All our edgings along debatable questions and dallying with my pet heresies were, however, cut short finally by Peter's frankly confessing his present position in regard to his prayer-anguish of former years. It was

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this I had kept in mind all day, by tentative questions relating to the final settlement of all questions in the Day Divine.

"You believed in God, and He failed you?"

"Not yet failed, even if unanswered yet."

"Was not the baffling of your plans a part of the Divine plan?"

"I am not bound to see a Divine plan in human blunders. Here's a bachelor who drops a button; it is to teach his clumsy fingers skill, or to prepare his heart to marry. It is plan Divine that he who makes mistakes should mend them, and not throw them off on Providence. The cultivation of one's judgment by comparison is on the whole more important than the discipline of any other intellectual faculty; vastly more important to all the world than that any one should win success by sheer good luck. He wrongs the race who contravenes wise business methods. If a blunderhead could skulk along, dodging all rules of prudence, and then inveigle Infinite Wisdom into blessing

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what he himself has cursed by bad judgment, it would break up human society. If I made a business plan, on the whole wise, and yet if I lacked in wise business methods, I am to blame; you will not catch me charging it off on God."

Seeing that I made no reply, Peter resumed: "Self devotement is not enough; there is needed proportion and balance of powers to carry on difficult business. Success is possible only on a correct theory as to details, as well as the main point. It was said of old, that the gods disapprove of him who tries to do too much. I may be bright enough to see the oak in the acorn; but if I do not know how to manipulate the sprout, my act is not different from that of the man who pulls up the sprout and throws away the acorn. If that acorn is never an oak the blame belongs not to Him who made the acorn."

And still I answered not.

"Unless my conduct matches the laws that are fitted for universal being, it is wrong.

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I have prayed for years that God would discover Himself to me, and if I now see Him in the unfolding of laws that are new to me, I am content: moral, intellectual, social laws that are as needful as the physical laws which guide the universe. He whose methods are not reducible to some law that is adapted to all worlds is arrested of Infinite Love. If, O Uncle wise, I have ever received credit for wisdom which I never deserved, my reputation must properly suffer whenever the discernment of the little handful of neighbors who know me is rectified; and the course for me to take is to improve my character by my own act, so that in other affairs I can get a better grip."

Peter evidently paused for a reply; but I said nothing.

"No one but a fool will spend his time in moaning the disillusions of life. Whether or not my plans were practicable, they are now ancient history,—and if I who had most to do with them gather a morsel of wisdom from unhappy days, it is so far good for this

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world's mending. God's personal love never changes; nor has there been ought to shake my faith in Him. My faith was always in Him, His wisdom, His love; and I never did have faith in my prayer as distinguished from faith in Him. My prayers as such were never good for anything; but God's wisdom and God's love I sought, and I clung to Him then, and cling to Him now. If these prayers, in the mind of Him who heareth, relate, as I suppose they did, to the main end sought—the benefit of the great unselfish work for which all detailed work was undertaken—then they will avail together with all who pray for this very work for a thousand years to come.”

“ But, Peter, you are not fair, not fair to yourself. If you lacked wisdom, I ought to have supplied your lack. The blame on you should in part come to me, and would in a fairer world than this. And can I shirk my share in God's final award for deeds in my body? ”

Happily I was so situated that I could

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make good my words, by repairing to Peter the losses sustained by his family. Yet, for the fun of the thing, I now turned to tease Peter, by getting him to pose as a martyr in his world's work; but to my surprise and chagrin he took it seriously.

XXV

MARTYRDOM

WHETHER this really had anything to do with the storm then brewing, I do not know; but brew it did, in darkening sea and sky, till the surges flashed and thundered all along the coast. Upon the very evening of our beautiful October ramble near Graves' beach the wind suddenly sprang up from the northeast and brought in fog; and the next forenoon the wind vane worked into the southeast with freshening air and promise of wet. Turning again to the northeast near night, it began to pour. At midnight the wind shifted to northwest, twisted off the arms of maples and elms, whistled through every door crack and key hole, shook the windows, and dashed against the house torrents of rain.

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Next morning it cleared off, with the wind and racket northwest by north. Passing around the head of the harbor at high tide, we crossed an arable ridge to the Old Neck beach. Behind it the long grass was lying flat, as if cut by the wind; and the shorter grass was waving with the light under-surface of the blades so exposed as to look like a moving mass of white flowers. Upon the sands the long rollers came plunging; first rolling up a ridge of water three or four feet high, then tumbling it down and tossing a myriad glittering fountains in the air five or six feet sparkling white—as if the margin of the sea were a soda fountain foaming north and south for a thousand leagues. And gusts of the west wind came in varying power, sometimes catching at the spray and throwing it upward twice its usual height. Hour after hour when we looked out upon the face of the sea, it was an intense blue flecked with white; and we could see, when the tide was falling, that upon every reef rising above the flood, the bounding billows were break-

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ing and throwing high into the air fountains of foam in the face of the wind. And when night came down upon the sea, there were waves of phosphorescent fire sparkling where the flying white caps had sported all day; and the beach itself and rock bound coast were all aflame.

It was in the midst of this heroic sea-turn that I undertook to carry out my project of getting Peter to pose as a martyr:

"Amid your scores of Youthful Dreams there must have been somewhere a vision of your being burned at the stake some day."

"But not every one chained to the stake," he replied, "merits the crown and palm. The fittest only are enrolled and sainted as martyrs. One may surround himself by fires of his own kindling, and be no match for their quenching. Let him die then and make no sign, save to rejoice in the higher type of manhood that springs in his place."

"But must not the higher type be preceded in the order of nature by one that is

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lower? And is not the consciousness of imperfection an incentive?"

"Were there no imperfection at the start, the successive generations could not improve the racial stock through the quick-wittedness of those most alert."

"But would you say that all who perish by the way have no crown and palm?"

"What I mean is, to state in a broad way that there is much individual suffering, incidental to mistakes in life, either one's own or other people's. This is nothing else than the friction of the world's machinery; if inconvenient, it is yet incident to the use of machinery that is confessedly so imperfect as to need a vast amount of oil to run at all, and that easily gets out of gear altogether. Sensitive men suffer from it. Yet it is of infinite importance that the general imperfection should prove an incentive. Must I not personally venture on high endeavor, even if I am liable to lose my quest by another's fault or my own? Is it not for me the best,

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to attempt a work that brings all my powers to the front? Is it not for me morally wholesome to undertake vastly more than I can do, unless happily I have the help of Almighty God?"

"Yet if you lose your health or die outright through lack of well-balanced endeavor, is your mistake then a mere object lesson?"

"Not otherwise can our disproportionate manhood be knocked into shape. Who would ever match health and work, life and service, if none were to fall untimely? Has not society the right to claim that no very important business be trusted to men who are apt to overwork, and who may break down altogether at a critical moment? It is surely for the good of mankind to kill out all who are unfit to survive; that is, to let them die out of position and influence, and out of the body itself, by their own imprudent courses. This is but wholesome natural law, meriting no crown or palm."

"I may as well tell you, Peter, that the

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way our world is made on Cape Anne is, that the men best balanced in all their powers, those whom we call the most prudent in complicated affairs, always contrive to look out for themselves, and so they escape the inconveniences of pinching self-denial and the risks of martyrdom. And of him who reckons not life as dear to him, who tramples on self, and calculates not for his own interest,—it is said that he is a crank, and that he deserves martyrdom; and we properly withhold from him the palm and the crown.”

“Well balanced men, balanced Godward as well as earthward, men whose minds work harmoniously along the lines of the Divine thought—they indeed are the stay of the whole earth. Yet if there be in any one of them the slightest taint of selfishness, that is in itself a lack of conforming to the ideal of manhood, it is a lack of balance, a disproportion that is as fatal to the highest moral success as the crankiness of others who are out of gear with God’s perfected machinery.”

“Suppose we say then that, in our imper-

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fect world, it is the true end of life to forget to glorify ourselves, to reduce our own personal inflation, and to honor those who are better endowed than ourselves, and Him who is perfect. Am I not honored most when my faulty work is pieced to that of other men who are better fitted by nature to succeed, and who are more perfectly adapted to the hand of God for His use?"

"The Kingdom is to the strongest, and he who can be used by the King of kings will take it. And in the on-sweeping march of God the individual experience is obscured and relatively insignificant. Who cares now whether or not he who uttered the Voice of God in the wilderness was beheaded? We think rather of his character and privilege. Jesus did not think this beheading to be the greatest of evils; nor would he interfere to hinder his forerunner and kinsman from dying so."

"Who cares now that Chrysostom was silenced by order of the clergy? I do not know what their names were."

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“The after ages never noticed whether he suffered much or little, he being more than a match for the ignominy put upon him.”

“Half the world is always in shadow.”

“If the ripening of the best fruit is forwarded by loss of the worst at an immature stage of growth, it is also true that the early fall of green and worm-eaten projects favor the development of those more fit to ripen. This world’s masters have been seeking ideals so great that if the most trivial perish, they are still on the track of the highest good. So life succeeds by the fine quality of its Youthful Dreams.”

“If our highest aims, instead of being personal, are allied to God and His ever advancing kingdom, they can never fail.”

“Do we not sometimes see vast areas of fertile country devastated by flood or cities by fire, or business plans swept away, involving ruin? It is to avert such evils, that men learn to handle the elements and compel success. And even in regard to individual disaster, the character destined to an immortal

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career is benefited by the shaking up of the soul; as we are just now reading reports from earthquake countries, that the malaria is reduced by shocks, and that an improved drainage ensues which makes the soil more productive."

"Whatever then be the outcome of this attempt or that, shall we not say that the attempt itself, even when it is conducted by imperfect wisdom, is of inestimable value, and that all the self-sacrifice, the high aiming, the strong crying and tears, these are the choicest treasures of earth and heaven."

"No, these are not the choicest."

"What then?"

"The best treasures are the self-sacrifice, the high aiming, the strong crying and tears, of men who are tolerably perfected in wisdom in their attempt to serve. Let me tell you that the one grand compensation of my life's most distasteful service is the fact that, in it all, I had occasion to make the acquaintance of great numbers of level-headed men,

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who honor God in their callings. They are to me the evidences of Christianity: noblemen of rank well known in heaven, chosen of God to do His earthly work. There is no amount of self-sacrifice and high aiming, strong crying and tears, that can make good any lack of practical wisdom in affairs. God's kingdom is strictly a business enterprise conducted on business principles, by clear-headed men who are the instruments of God. These are the men to be honored of earth and heaven. Unless a fair allowance of practical wisdom is vouchsafed to vast numbers of God's people, unless multitudes of men of well balanced judgment in affairs are of God and for God, then selfishness, as a rule and system of private scheming, can never be broken down. Nor can the world's life be carried forward upon lines good for all, except by men wise from a business point of view. Society is impossible without sanctified common sense; nor can the Kingdom of God be carried to a triumphant issue by a

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parcel of fanatics and fools. It is not God's method to put honor upon instruments notably unfit."

"Was this then, O Nephew dreaming, a part of the Dream of your own Youth that you would become a good business man?"

"No, I never thought of it."

"Why then allude to it now?"

"It is one of the Dreams of my Immortal Youth. In ages hereafter I expect to become an all-round business man; and in that capacity I fully intend to preempt and colonize a few continents and choice sites for cities in Jupiter, by the time that globe becomes a paradise."

"It is well you speak of immortality, since none can know better than you do that the mistakes of your life will hinder your being justified by the men of your own generation."

"The boon of immortality were well spent, if the first few centuries should be given to the attempt to lead a well proportioned life. Is not the exercise of prudence as needful as prayer? And wise management as essential

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as faith? Of the two, is not a well kept account book as important as the Bible in promoting the Kingdom of God? The book of Proverbs is as much a part of holy writ as the Apocalypse. A home-building or homely house-keeping wisdom is as truly from God as the gift of celestial song."

"I confess, Peter, to a certain disappointment in your life."

"What is that?"

"I had thought it possible, if not probable, that you would become one of God's brawlers; filling your small corner of the world with howling at the eclipse of light."

"But would it not be ill-fitting in a child of God to cease to be sweet-spirited toward God and man, on account of the effacement of that which is imperfect and transitory in his life? I am confident that God has a certain purpose in my life; and that I mark it all over with designs of my own,—as a child might make crude drawings upon a shaft of stone: if now my pencilings are effaced—perhaps in tears—the granite of God's pur-

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pose still remains. The Lord reigns, and I rejoice."

"Is it then your sober judgment, that this is better for you and better for the world, than if you reigned?"

"How can I persuade myself to find fault?"

XXVI

A BALANCE WHEEL

THE November frost was glittering in the fields, as we walked and shook the shaggy grass. The little brooks, that, falling, sought the sea, built gleaming grottoes of crystal; with polished pillars of ice, mounted by arches ablaze with brilliants. In sunny nooks, by woodland pools, we saw wild rose seed-cases glowing red through an icy coating; or the frost had formed a transparent veil over sprays of evergreen or partridge vines hanging over the water. And we followed swiftly running streams that bore all the glee of June bubbling and glimmering in the sun under transparent ice.

“You told me wisely,” I said to Peter after cracking the last nut and roasting the last apple of our lunch, “when you said that wisdom is the principal thing in God’s King-

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dom; and that talent in business is foremost, if one will honor Him. If this be so, what is the use of your praying so intensely and working so intensely for the same thing? I had the feeling in reading your diary, when I prepared your obituary notice, that you prayed too much in proportion to the small amount of business you were doing. A vast deal of the hopefulness and the executive quality of the world is not necessarily based on private prayers. The heart of a savage is buoyant in the morning,—after breakfast; and it is easy for him in the forenoon to believe in his war-gods.”

Then, in our pine-tasselled banquet hall, I listened to the booming billows; and pleased my eyes with the illusion of ship hulls lifted almost out the water by atmospheric conditions, and I saw that the lands across the bay had been raised forty feet by the looming of the sea. And I watched, upon the rough-edged horizon, the rise and fall of saw-toothed waves,—the tokens of agitated realms of storm afar.

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"Will you say, O kinsman beloved," asked Peter, "that our judgment day, of the earth earthy, is not yet over?"

"It still lingers."

"At last accounts then, I believe that we stood convicted of ill balanced powers, damaging our mundane work, and ill fitting us for higher realms."

"We did indeed confess to disproportion."

"Shall we then perfect our lives by availing ourselves of Infinite perfection? Will it tend to rectify what is wrong in us, to be alone with Him, to compare ourselves with Him? Are not our powers best developed, both by hourly work and by seeking the Divine Ideal? Is not high quality in manliness the happiest Dream in Dreaming Youth?"

"Yet what is prayer, primarily, if not to win the help of God?"

"If my need of help is my occasion to pray, yet the far away and ultimate end and use of prayer is the knowledge of God."

But never a moment, in this our delightful judgment day, could our eyes be diverted

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from the frolic of tufted waves near by upon the serious winter sea; laughing, rollicking waves, like heedless boys amid grave-mounds. And sometimes we heard a low moaning, like the sound of rising wind in drifted fields. And as we listened to each other, our ears attent were eager for the varied notes of mysterious music always floating in from the sea.

"Yet, Peter, one may wander in the woods, as you might say, prayerfully, for years, and never find out God."

"I should indeed so wander like a wild beast, did I not differentiate myself by feeding upon the world's best thought relating to God. Out of cycles untold of physical and mental and moral evolution there has appeared in recent ages of the globe the idea of wrong, of right, of obligation, of conscience and God. In some dim and mysterious stage of unfolding human life the relation of man to God was formulated, and it came, in ages rude, to be a power; and now we say no race is civilized without embodied

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laws of love and obligation Godward and manward."

"Unique, indeed, is the honor that falls to the patriarchs of our race, the seers who voiced in old-time wildernesses their vision of the Invisible; first standing for Him, as Primal Cause, amid barbaric peoples who knew not what they worshipped."

"A boon on after ages they conferred who first made prominent the idea of God, and who first put into literary form God's moral attributes and our own relation to Him."

"Dominating vast bodies of men during many ages, these earlier formulas of religious thought have come to be prized as sacred; and through them unnumbered generations have made God first in their lives."

"Are not the Hebrew books most helpful? To me none more so, in searching wide."

"Living as those writers did in the very day-dawn of the Light of the World, we cannot but see them when we look toward the Light."

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“As at every day-dawn, living a little inland, we notice certain prominent trees, upon high ridges eastward in distant forests, standing out so sharply against the sky that we cannot see the rising light without observing these distinguished tree-forms; so upon the heights of far-off centuries in the Orient, we see a score of Hebrews standing in distinct outline,—nor can we note the brilliant historic movements which began in the ages in which they lived, without a clear vision of their unique personality.”

“This, indeed, insures posthumous fame, if one is privileged to introduce the Unseen God to His own world,—pointing the nations to Him, discovering to men the Soul of the universe.”

“To the world’s Bible-makers there falls the meed of enduring fame.”

“We properly say Bible-makers; and accord to each his due.”

“We accord to each his due, upon the actual comparison of the contents of the

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books, and their historic influence upon the human race."

"Unless upon such comparison of literature with literature, merely as literature, we discover in our Bible that which is highest in moral inspiration and religious authority, we will never call it the Book of books."

"And we will say that it is authoritative, only upon the ground that it actually meets the moral needs of mankind, and is supported by our practical reason."

"Not otherwise is it of divine authority. If He who made men in His own image has not so revealed Himself as to meet their moral needs, and to commend Himself to their highest practical reason, He has not yet revealed Himself."

"If the literary men and religious leaders of the world can so match the Hebrew historians and poets and prophets and apostles and the historic revelation of Jesus Christ, as to create a new moral era which will comport with the rise and development of Christianity

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as a world-power, and rival what we call our sacred literature, we will then look for a new Bible."

"Until they do, we will wait, and hold on to what we have."

This November day, so bright and beautiful, by the side of the sparkling ocean, was to me an anniversary day, upon which it was fitting to delight in God. Yet Peter shocked me roughly; cracking the dry bones of all my ologies.

"I have, Uncle, no earthly use for the Bible, except to find Jesus Christ in it. It is altogether a mistaken view to think of this Book as the main thing, and the life of Jesus Christ as an incident. It is God's revelation of his own moral character in Christ which is the main thing, and all the rest of the Bible is but an incident. God's love to men can never appear but through human conditions. Christ is none other than the Ideal Manhood, the express image of the Divine Person, the Divine Self-sacrificing Love, who claims indeed in some proper sense to be

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the Divine Person himself limited by the conditions of humanity."

"Do you say then, Peter, that it is nonsense for me to spend Sunday in whittling Old Testament texts or New, to make what is square fit the round holes of my creed? Do you say that in place of doing this, I must first and last, and only, preach Jesus Christ? That every point in revelation is impertinent, which does not dimly or clearly relate to Him? That He is the only reason why the Bible itself exists?"

"It is indeed so, if it is through Him that God reveals His moral attributes. The character of Jesus Christ is my main evidence that there is an authoritative Divine revelation in this book. To others it is different; but while other arguments than this of the unique personality of Jesus Christ interest me, I do not insist upon them. To God's love in a Person here upon the earth, my being responds; since I can know about Him, and take hold of Him, as I cannot take hold of Absolute Being, the First Cause, and Primal

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Force. If the word of God is prized as Daily Food, it is because it is like the food of Dante; while it satisfies us, it makes us hunger for it. I hunger for God in Christ, and nothing else satisfies me."

"Out of the infinite cycles of history, and out of the darkness primeval of prehistoric times, there came at last in man's moral evolution the character of Jesus Christ, so unlike the ages before Him and the ages after Him that he is historically unique. In Him we have the highest expression of God's moral nature which the world has yet known. Who can say aught against Him? In God's self-revelation, the character and work of Jesus Christ was surely first, and all else in Hebrew story but incident to that."

"Here indeed," said Peter, handling his pocket Bible, "is a distinct and unique contribution to the world's thought relating to God; and this is why it has such hold on men. Here is a definite advance upon all that we can learn by natural theology. We discover here, that the word love is the best expres-

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sion of God's moral nature; and that this is the rule binding upon moral beings in all worlds. And this love is here expressed in a Person, God's love manifested in concrete form under proper human conditions; and in Him we find that well balanced human character which we despair of finding in ourselves. He is the Ideal of humanity. And God's old-time mercy to the penitent is now mercy through Jesus Christ. Through Him is man's redemption. Instead of law thundering from out the heavens, over mountain crags, we have a Person limited indeed by human conditions; and His life was the light of men."

"Still, O amateur theologian, you would not so define the Incarnation as to imply the removal of the First Cause of all things, the Sustainer, the Sovereign Disposer, the Moral Governor of the Universe, from His throne during the years of our Saviour's life?"

"We can no more accurately define the Incarnation than we can define that fact in the nature of God which corresponds to the

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words,—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Whatever we mean by a Divine Incarnation, there was not confusion in the heavens above, and there need be no confusion in our own understanding. Just how God was in Christ, or just what it was in His mysterious nature which made it proper for Jesus to claim divine honors, we have no more the means of knowing than we have of knowing the underlying mystery of many accepted facts in the natural world. There are laws behind the laws; laws known to the Infinite, Personal, Primal Force, that are unknown to the finite.”

“Now let ear and tongue repose,” I answered, making ready to return to my house, “to please the eye and foot.”

At this point, we left our brooklet to sing on through winter nights and winter days. And when we had so far returned homeward as to cross the Sundown Hill, we saw Venus hanging low over Glasse Head. And the new moon, just sinking in the west, was lighting up the harbor mouth, and a narrow

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line of water seaward; the illumination upon the waters glowing like a celestial vision upon the fringe of night, which was coming in from the east. Then the after-glow of day showed familiar fields and gardens westward; and looking toward the sea, we saw, near by, the flowing waters a-sparkle in the moonbeams, and a deep dark-blue color adorning certain inlet fingers of the ocean; while far eastward the whole horizon was dim with gathering darkness. So from our rocky height we saw the slowly fading daylight of the land; and, at the same moment, saw the fall of the curtains of the night on the sea with their brilliant silver fringes next the shore.

XXVII

DESTROYING LIFE'S DREAM

IT was a fortnight before we walked again, unless in tread-mill round of daily duties; but on the night of the full moon I looked out in the small hours to see the orb southwest; and I saw the ocean south at such an angle that there were no moonbeams reflected,—so the water looked as black as ink across the gleaming snow fields. To catch the earliest dawn from out the sea, we went forth, to pace the sands at half tide between the foaming brine and foaming snow—both flying flakes and tossing spray made airy by the west wind. The new snow had been so swept from the beach by a tide-broom that it was easy walking; first up, then down. This made conversation not so difficult as when we were floun-

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dering along a pathless way amid the inland drifts, where we had to think too much of our physical footing to debate our themes.

For breaking our fast, it was not hard to find a lee; and then we were free to make a long morning, with broadening walk as the sea retreated.

More welcome to us than the light was this early session of our peripatetic academy, in the bracing air, as we walked hard by the winter waves, which were so frosty that they smoked after sunrise as if low fires had been suddenly kindled all over the sea, the smoke driven hither and yon by a fresh breeze.

"There are very few men in all the world," remarked Peter, "who can be called men of genius; but our globe as such is carried on the Atlas shoulders of a great body of earnest-minded men of plain common sense. He who is well proportioned and who acts with push and promptness and good judgment is likely to carry his point, even if he has not upon the whole so great intellectual caliber as many others who are ill-balanced."

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"That, Peter, is a platitude worth noting," I observed. "You must have arisen very early, to be able to say that."

"It is only a small part of the work of society that is done by the co-operation of specialists, each one of whom is more or less out of harmony with mankind, although richly endowed for his own department. The bulk of the world's business is done by the man of merely average outfit for life. And if important business unfortunately rests mainly upon one man of no symmetrical character and powers, he may be very useful, but he is unequal to the work; and from the sum total of his achievement, it is needful to subtract the mischief wrought by his lack of proportion."

"That is another platitude worth getting up very early in the morning for."

"Now, thirdly," continued my peripatetic preacher, "as to the average man, it is impossible to overstate the vast influence over the whole human race, which is exercised by those immense bodies of relatively obscure

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men in all ages, who each in his own life-work reaches after a higher ideal by becoming more and more acquainted with himself through his knowledge of God, and by sturdy self-contending, and by persistent self-development in order to answer to mandates divine. It is so that the globe is uplifted."

"Do you reason, therefore, that the average man needs much more than his ordinary business maxims and methods, in order to carry on God's Kingdom in the world?"

"He needs to hear an authoritative voice. Have we not, with the story of our Master, a written 'Thus saith the Lord?' Does not a business life develop a selfish and one-sided character, which can be rectified only by listening to the inner voice and to the written word, and giving heed to the God of nature and of human history? Does not our daily activity need to be idealized by bringing it into spiritual relations, to serve unselfish ends, making it the instrument of Divine Love and helpful to man? Is not the average man best developed when devoted to an

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Ideal above himself, and sustained by a life not his own?

“Is it not, in a business point of view, a mistake in life for one to become so hard-headed as to scorn his nobler self, so practical as to deny the spiritual element within, so fatuitous as to quench his imaginative faculty, and to slay the Ideals of Life? Does not Goethe say that Nature rejoices in illusion; and that if a man destroys this in himself, she punishes him like a tyrant, but if he follows her in confidence she presses him to her heart? What the human race needs is to Dream, to Dream of God, to Idealize Life; and they who do it are the forerunners of a new age.”

I glanced uneasily at the waves, lest so long a sermon spoil my walk; but I was reassured when I saw that the wind was still blowing upon the low sand dunes near by; and when I saw that on the sea, wherever the waves were dashing here and there on reefs and islet rocks, the west wind was still catching at the spray and setting it adrift over

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the water, like the snow in its flight on land.

"Peter," I said with some resolution, "you would not have the average woman agonizing in prayer over cakes and gingerbread, millinery and soap, or even her shopping; nor the average man in an ecstasy of devotion over corn and onions, or shoe pegs and yardsticks."

"Faithful to the Dreams of his Youth would I have every man, faithful to those mighty aspirations which God has implanted in every human soul. False to himself and treacherous toward God is he who does not aim at pushing the entire world instead of himself alone into the path of progress, and avail himself of God's help in doing it. The advance of the race would stop, but for this unique individual activity of common people, possessed with an idea and acting as instruments of the Divine energy."

"It is true that all invention was once but an idea, that all progress was first in the mind as an ideal."

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“And if it be not also true, that some one is to be found, upon whom God can lay great burdens, whom He can stir to great strivings, to unutterable longings,—then the imperfection of our human race in its physical, intellectual, moral, and social relations, will never be put upon the road for mending.”

“I have, for myself, a thousand times shut my eyes to heavenly visions, to the highest possible attainments in my own life, because I chose to conform to sheeplike custom, and would not be at the trouble to get out of my sheep walk. Why, I have asked myself, should I undergo the nervous strain of high aspiration and its disappointing achievement? Does it pay, does it pay to be unselfish, and to struggle hard at it, and to wear life away in it? So I have asked myself many a day—and I shamefully confess it.”

“Yet, what point in sociology is better established than the fact that the evolution of man proceeds according to laws, through

which the race is steadily uplifted? And what is more firmly settled than the fact that the development of conscience is one of the mightiest influences in establishing a practical brotherhood among men? The interpretation of life through conscience is what elevates mankind. What crowds the world along toward perfection, is individual moral alignment with the First Cause of man's moral evolution. Any other scheme in sociology is trivial, or like turning a nut the wrong way."

"So perfected manhood and perfected Christianity are interchangeable terms."

"If not, we will throw up Christianity."

"Yet there can be no faith in Christianity, unless it is reasonable to exercise faith."

"What do you mean by reasonable?"

"Practical reason; what is reasonable in respect to moral conduct toward God and man."

"That is, faith must be commended by our intellectual judgment of what is right and fitting and manly."

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“Is not the Kingdom of God utterly impracticable, unless Christianity commends itself as reasonable and therefore authoritative to the average man of roundabout sense?”

“Let me ask then, as to prayer, whether hard-headed business men are likely to have fanatical views?”

“Correct principles for doing business, and correct praying, must go together in building the city of God, or else it will never be built.”

“Reason at its best beholds God. Reason at its best hears God.”

“And it is the highest Dream of our humanity to walk and work with God.”

XXVIII

INCREASING THROUGH DECREASING

THE ocean itself comprised scant three acres as we dimly saw it long before sunrise upon the 26th of January, looking out of the little cove indented between Glasse Head and the Great Hill; but when it was lighter we could see further; and when the blinding northeast snow storm was not so thick, we could see a broader horizon; and when it cleared away altogether, and the sun shone, then we knew how greatly we were mistaken at day-dawn in supposing the ocean to be so small.

“Were I to take ship, and sail the sea for years, as some of my townsmen have done,” I said, as we were sitting upon the rocks, peering out where the flakes were less thickly falling, “I should, upon my return, suffer untold chagrins if my neighbors, every time

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they were to see me, should taunt me upon my ignorance of the true size of the sea upon this late-dawning and stormy morning."

"So," replied Peter, "the width, and depth, and secret life-currents, the true proportion and fullness of the life of any man are little known to us when we see him in days of dark adversity, or when we stand by his coffin lid. Him we know in part, the ocean sweep of his being is known to God only."

"Much more then," I added, "as time sweeps on and our horizon is broadened,—shall we know the true relation which our dark and stormy earliest Christian years sustain to the final blaze of the Self Revelation of God's moral attributes through Jesus Christ and his contribution to the world's progress."

"The world in its youth," it was answered, "always dreamed of a Golden Age, long past."

"It will find it in the coming reign of an unselfish Love between man and man."

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“When all men recognize the two points of the moral law, so fit for all ages and all worlds, they will see the Messiah in his beauty, the King of our moral universe; and of the increase of His government there will be no end.”

“If the fittest alone survive, then indeed will all things be put under his feet.”

“And in that Age of Gold, the soul’s Companion will fulfill the Dream of the world’s youth, that the gods are seen with men.”

“Then will all men love what ought to be loved, and hate what ought to be hated.”

“So life will be complete in Him, who is quaintly said to abide in His disciples, and to be formed within them.”

“Is Christianity then nothing else than Christ embodied in the life of His disciples in all ages?”

“Christianity is not an idea, it is a life—a life conforming to an ideal. It is God in Christ abiding in us, and readjusting our disproportion of character. It is only by some such process that my ill-balanced make up,

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my evil heredity, my predisposed habit, my personal will atwist, and my voluntary misdirection, can be finally set to rights,—by the forming of Christ within me as a living Power, a new life, a new manhood.”

“It this be so, then will not an ideal manhood some day walk the earth? He will be a man made so beautiful within, that it will be known that he has been as a learner abiding with Him whom he delights to call his Master.”

“Is not this what the world looks for, as the perfected fruitage of a Divine Friendship, the final proof that God is with us? Not otherwise can Immanuel maintain a footing on this globe, than by the reproduction of his own life.”

“What is our highest social Dream, but the Modern Imitation of Christ?”

“Until it practically permeates our political life, we cannot speak of our ‘Christian’ nations.”

“What is our Life’s sweetest Dream but

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to know God, to be filled with God, to be the instrument of God?"

"To have all personal interests subordinated to Him?"

"To give to Him the honor, and to hold all personal honor as incidental."

"So to be His fore-runners upon the earth."

"If such honor might be mine, all else might shrink away and be forgotten."

"Let us, therefore, now, O noble friend, speak frankly; as if to-day were our personal day of judgment."

"We will speak frankly, truly."

"Then fie upon thee for a man, if thou hast nothing to say to the world, save, 'I', 'I', 'I', 'I have done, so and so'; or, 'I have not done so and so'. What cares the world as to what thou hast done or not done, or about thee? But if thou canst point any one to the Master, be up and at it:—'There standeth among you, O men of this generation, one whom ye know not.' Put off thy

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shoes; thou vain prophet; it is holy ground. Unworthy to unloose the latchet of thy Master's feet, call thou upon all men to behold Him, to behold Him, who taketh away the sin of the world. As to thyself, personally, whatever relates to thee is impertinent; save so far forth as thy life is modified by the Son of Man. If thou art related to Him, speak; but let the speech be not of thyself, but of Him for whom the world waits."

"Have I then degenerated into a mere proclaimer of myself, and myself glorified? Have I been self-seeking, always thinking how this and that would affect me, in the lofty employment of coddling my own reputation?"

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

"Can we now, with due reverence—without so much as bordering upon an unsuitable form of speech,—contrast our own insignificant personality with that of the Saviour of men?"

"We may not do it, or have our names mentioned in the same breath with Him, un-

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less we make it first our sole mission to act as His fore-runners.'

"It is to me personally a great satisfaction to think of myself as falling by degrees in self-esteem, when compared with my constantly growing appreciation of the character of Jesus. In proportion to my mental maturity, *ego* will sink and Jesus rise; now, and in future ages. He it is, who is to come."

"It is reverently I say, that in ages to come I shall constantly advance in my apprehension of the disparity between my own personality and that of the Infinite manifestation of the personal love of God in Christ. Indeed, my powers will unfold only by my attempt to trace the unfoldings of Infinite Love and Life and Power."

"My disproportionate character, my imperfection, my frailty, my moral obliquity, add to the natural limitation of my powers; and I rejoice that any personality I have, in and of myself, is sinking more and more into obscurity; and that I, in my highest powers,

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really live only as I live in Christ, and gain a certain Christlikeness."

"I began life by thinking a great deal about myself. It was perhaps needful to make prominent in my own eyes the *ego*; else I should have had no sense of individuality. Then, as I came to know men, I found other personalities like my own, and learned that God was first. Since then, I have lessened my sense of my own importance, in exact proportion to my enlarging knowledge of Him who is Infinite in perfection."

"In this world I am misunderstood; and before I am understood, I shall be forgotten."

"Yet is there in the entire universe of being any one more misunderstood and misinterpreted than God himself,—and that too by those who call themselves His best friends? Shall I not, therefore, lead a serene life, heedless of any misrepresentation that befalls me?"

"What recks He who died on the cross, that I too suffer slight wrong? He without cause, and I with merited shame."

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“Jesus Christ took the affront from His magnanimity, not because he needed to.”

“When the Saviour of men was dying a slave’s death, it did not occur to Him as desirable that He should be spared an hour, in order that he might send for the high priest or even bespeak the beloved John, to explain that this sad calumny of his unselfish life, this infamy of the cross, was brought about by misrepresentation made by certain Pharisees, Sadducees, or nameless vulgar people, or by the treachery of a disciple. He died calmly, bowing to the behest of heaven; died praying for those who misapprehended his mission; died with life unrecorded, save imperfectly in the hearts of a people who knew Him and loved Him; died trusting His earthly fame to the ages.”

“How fitting then that He should become greater in the eyes of all men, and that all others than He who have worn the form of humanity should decrease in their sense of their relative importance.”

“Therefore will I be crucified unto the

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world, and live only as Christ liveth in me."

"And if He liveth in me, He will manifestly multiply spiritual forces within me; so that through Him, my individual life and influence will be of greater value."

"There is behind me a surging crowd of individuals like myself,—disproportionate, imperfect, frail, in moral error, with natural limitation of powers; and, among them all—sixteen hundred millions of them—my own personality is as little to be distinguished as a drop of water running in a river or tossed by ocean waves. But of the increase, the unfolding of His Personality, of His moral sway among men, there shall be no end."

"His name shall endure as the sun, but my name be forgotten; my earthly name so sadly dishonored through my own fault and so sadly dishonored by imperfect beings around me,—my earthly name as much forgotten as that of a trilobite upon the seaward hills of Braintree. If I ever have a name

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that shall endure as the sun, it will be a new name to indicate a new character, a personality glorified by being perfectly formed in the image of Him whose Name is above every name."

"Or if, by a change in the simile, it may be said that I am not without a small and slightly distinguishable earthly influence through His life present and abiding in my imperfect earthly life, yet I am distinctly provincial in character, taste, and influence; and my province is infinitesimally small. But to Him every knee shall bow. My life and influence upon the earth occupy but a moment of time; but with Him are the unending ages."

"My self-will is a weak will; I pray that it may decrease. In its place, I would have the energizing will of Him who must increase."

"It is a source of unending satisfaction, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."

"Like the martyr of old, I seek nothing,

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desire nothing—Dream about nothing,—but Jesus Christ.”

“ This is the true crowning of life, to place the crown upon the head of Another. By this act, my Master becomes, to me, my Lord; the object of my soul’s adoration, my Moral Ideal; through whom I forget myself; through whom there is formed within me an unselfish love, which is, in its finite measure, like that of the Infinite God. And what is all this, but my crowning Dream of Youth and Age? ”

XXIX

THE HOUSE ROCK

WHEN it came the next midsummer, the Old Man Peter and I were out boating one day.

“Don’t you think,” I asked—as we set foot on House Island,—“that our astronomical neighbors are a very uncanny and disobliging set? I like the geologists much better. They have the more exact science. They tell you just how many years they want for preparing the earth as it is now, and then they go ahead and take it, and you have it without further trouble. And they don’t worry you about the price of real estate on this planet, in five million years from now.”

“They are not more accurate,” said Peter, who had just returned from a scientific exploring expedition on the Labrador coast.

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"Only the other day, a man on shipboard told me, that, in three thousand years past, the length of the day had never varied one one-hundredth part of a second; then he made my hair stand on end, by telling me that in thirty centuries our globe has apparently lost fifteen seconds of time in making her annual bout,—half a second in every one hundred years; so that our planet, by retarding the sun's attraction and by the friction of the tides, will come to a standstill in six millions of years,—to the detriment of this high-priced shore property."

"If it gets to be reasonably low by that time, we'll come back and buy this island, and run our chances."

"Some day our universe will hear the troubled echoes of crashing worlds."

"You are out in your rhetoric, Peter; a million and a half 'suckers' have been standing for ten years in Chicago, according to the last census, listening through a patent ear trumpet, with a pan capable of expanding to three thousand miles diam-

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eter at an elevation of two hundred and fifty thousand feet; and they haven't heard the cerulean vault echo once. Leave out the 'echo'."

It was just sundown, and we went to camp in the little grove of walnut and bass wood; but we were waked at midnight by a thunder storm,—and we moved about in the darkness to gather our belongings into shelter, using the frequent lightning flashes instead of lanterns.

The most part of the next day we spent at the House Rock; with its convenient roof for our shade, and the bold breakers rolling in upon the doorstep.

"There is astronomical agreement," said Peter, setting aside the coffee pot, "that the principal source of the sun's heat is by contraction; and that not far from thirty millions of years is the limit of duration for our system,—and by no means twice that."

"If we were to reckon the day of our system by a twenty-four-hour clock, Canadian time, we should say that it is eighteen

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o'clock now,—verging on toward the end of the world's brief day."

"Our accurate geological brethren think the contraction of the sun has been more moderate in ages past, so that there have been ever so many more millions of years than the astronomers say, for the evolution of life upon this globe."

"And I have no objections. Have you?"

"Not the slightest."

And then we watched the sea up-tossing its white and changing fringe of flowers upon the rocks; and we noticed, softly rising, from areas unknown in the south, the midsummer haze adrift toward land.

"In a few scores, or in a few hundreds of millions of years, this way or that," said my companion, "the system of things we call creation will perish like a lily of the field."

"In respect to its orderliness, its habitability, its use to finite souls, it is plain that it is continued only from one finite point of time to another finite point."

"Whatever be the strictly scientific ter-

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minology, there will come a day when the arm of the Almighty will be slackened, when He will loosen the tension by which the stars have been kept in their courses of unimaginable celerity and in their certainty of motion; and then the battalions of suns will reel and stagger in their march, and their planets will feebly wander in their orbits and their satellites will forget their rising; then, when the centrifugal forces are outmatched by gravitation, the satellites will fall into the planets, the planets into the sun, and the sun impinge with some mightier world or blackly voyage the skies like an abandoned hull threatening the seas."

"There was an infinite lapse of ages before our globe came into being, and there will be an infinite lapse of ages after our world ceases to bear fruit or life, or even to swing through the heavens as the pale ghost of a planet under a waning sun; an infinite lapse of ages after all the suns and their satellites fall like a leaf, and after the heavens are rolled together as a scroll."

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"If the sun be faint and the earth be weary of well-doing, let us as immortal spirits look to Him who fainteth not, neither is weary."

"Amid the darkened solitudes of space, in eons past, and in unending ages to come, the face of God alone gives light to the inhabitants of celestial worlds."

"As we have seen the light of the morning star disappear at sunrise, so when the material universe has vanished, the Uncreated One will abide in the heavens during immeasurable cycles of subsequent duration; and, during life interminable, will seek out new solitudes of space, never yet lighted by suns, and there erect new worlds. Then, by the fiat of the Almighty, 'Let there be light,' motion and light will reappear."

"So we may believe that our present rising and falling star-system is but one link in the golden chain of God's creation,—a chain that has come down out of a beginningless succession of ages, and that will extend into time without limit hereafter."

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“Are not the songs of the morning stars of the elder creation still resounding through the skies, and will they not reverberate during future rhythmic beats of time unending,—‘Glory to God in the highest, and in the heavens peace to all of good will?’”

The grey mist was now stealing in from the sea, and drifting along the darkened coast; the ghost-like ships we saw floating in a lightly woven veil of fog.

“If,” I said with stilted and sophomoric phase, “if these venerable frames of the creation around us, are related as the dew of the morning to the Ancient of Days; if the reeling off of our planets from a vast central sun, and then the winding up again of the thread of the universe of suns, be but like the rise and fall of a sand grain of the sea, uptossed and falling upon the measureless shore of the material works of an Infinite Creator; then all the Dreams of your Youth, O child, all your varied phases of professional life and pioneer service in all these years, are of dig-

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nity and value only as they are related to the imperishable periods of eternity."

"They are related to this world in its perfected future in the reign of God, much as the imperfect forms of life in earlier ages are related to man; or the earlier forms of society to our Golden Age which is to come. But for the spirit of eternity in it, all my life-work would be as little important as that of this limpet on this rock; as it is, my Dream of Life has a grip on life everlasting. To do the divine will is more than all callings to do this or that, to lead a life affixed to the divine will and purpose is alone far reaching, and it is this which is projected into eternity."

"If all your high endeavor were of to-day only, what differs it from the leaping ambition of the surf at our feet?"

"Intense years, unutterable longings, seeking God in secret cloisters, walking by faith, faith unshaken by earthquakes,—these are not the whim of a day, but they pertain to the mood of time undying."

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"In my own life, Peter, my mightiest plans have perished as the weakest, only at a later date, and at a higher altitude upon the mountain of life; but I am still intensely alive, still full of Dreams, with still a thirst that can never be satiated till I taste the waters of immortality."

"I am grateful to God," he replied, "for heart-craving and hungry years, in which I have sought for the heavenly food, and fed upon manna; being oft in the wilderness, to follow the beacon fires of God. These years have quenched in me all desire for earthly good or fame. My heart is still, since I have known Him, the Fount of Life, and Feast forever calling."

"And yet your prayers have fallen as snow on the sea, or this trailing mist upon the face of the waters."

"Not so. Their answer is in my bones and blood. For them all I am a different man. By them all I have been brought face to face with God."

"Nor is a falling snowflake useless to the

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sea, or dripping cloud returning to its ocean bed; nor prayers are lost which fall into the bosom of God from whence they issued."

"The sum of finite life and powers bears no perceptible relation to the beginningless life and measureless power of the Creator of all things which exist; but the breath of prayer, the anguished pulsation of a believing heart bear as definite a relation to the Kingdom of God in all ages in all worlds as one chemical atom to the changes in nature."

"Whatever on earth concerns the city of God is already gifted with immortality; related as it is to the expansion of powers supernal."

"And all earthly hopes, and earthly studies, and earthly employments, fade in the light of heaven; as I have seen the light of all common stars vanish in the splendid aurora of the North Land."

"The windows of the soul are glorified with infinite harmonies of color, when the light of another world shines through them."

"When Christ is formed within me, I

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shall be a new man, with a new name; and forget my former self, and enter a new life with new achievement; and all earthly agitation will be but a cloud of yesterday, or as last night's dream."

"It was, I well remember, one Dream of your Youth to find repose in ages unending."

The fog drift had now cleared the islets and headlands, the wind having drawn slightly to westward; and many leagues of shifting sunset color now invited the eye to silence the tongue. But before nightfall the ashy sea was overhung by ashy clouds and mist; and the surface of the sea and the cloud forms and the thin mist were indistinguishable at a little distance,—so that, in the gathering darkness, the light-house lamps across the waves looked like floating balls of fire.

The evening came in so cool that we built a low fire near the House Rock; being careful to conceal it from the shipping. When, an hour later, the fog thickened and fringes of mist began to sweep in upon the rocks, I

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left Peter standing by the fading camp-fire; and turned to climb the cliff: "Let us go home," I said.

At the height, I saw that the moistened air was dense on the rocks below; and a thickening veil of mist had come between us. Again I called,—“Let us go home.”

Then suddenly I heard the rise and rush and roar of that earthquake wave which touched our New England coast so near midnight on that fatal fifteenth of August, so sadly remembered by some of our north shore people. It came in from the east-south-east; and its course was noted along five hundred leagues. The height of its wash, at exposed points, appears to have depended upon the angle at which it struck the diverse ledges. It made a clean sweep around the House Rock.

The terror of the hour, and what it meant to me, I have no heart to write. I saw, upon the instant, as if in an electric flash, the domestic circle to which Peter belonged; the Queen in her ripened womanhood so chas-

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tened by those months in which she had believed herself to be a widow, now a widow indeed,—and the comely daughters in their college days. And I saw them bright and buoyant still, without the thought of mourning weeds; I saw them, the daughters of the King, engaged in celestial service, anticipating their immortal heritage. It was long before I could bring my mind to think of anything else. I chose to keep my mind centred upon that,—unwilling to think of myself.

It was not till near noon of the next day that I was taken off, since I never saw my dory again. What else was never found I cannot speak of.

Very vaguely do I remember that long night, after the great wave and the vision of domestic sorrow had passed by. In the solemn stillness which fell upon the sea, between the roar and the roar of each new wave that rolled up the rocks, I sometimes fancied that I could hear my Nephew's voice: "Welcome to the Unsetting Sun; welcome thou Uncreated Light."

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But I heard nothing, and I saw nothing. The mist was heavy, like a funeral pall. Then I listened to the gurgling sounds in the inner recesses of great crevices cut in the sea wall by ancient waves. And when the rise and fall, and regularly recurring roar, of the waves that followed the first great shock had died away, there was little to be heard but the midnight sobbing of the sea.

In mingled terror and bitter anguish, in broken cry, and sudden—almost shrieking—tones I began to call. But my voice could never reach the stately shores of the unseen country.

Then I stood silent; conscious, at last, that I was alone. And I waked, as if from a long Dream. Then I fell off in dreaming, and I called again. Then I stood, as if upon the silent shore of the eternal sea, listening for an echo. Then I fumbled about the ledge to find some relic of the camp-fire; and I found a half burnt twig that had been jammed into a crack in the ledge. Again I called into the unanswering air, and stretched forth my

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empty hands to grasp vague shadow. Hot, scalding tears were falling,—as I called, and called again, and grasped the empty mist.

And still I clung to the rocks; and I searched with clumsy fingers for dead or dying embers, as if the sea had never scrubbed that hearth. I could not put out or cover the dying fire in my heart; kindled so long since by him of whom I was now bereft. How could I wake to empty days, or live on in a desolate life?

I said then, standing there, leaning hard upon the great House Rock, so oft to me the House of Prayer,—“I can never be as if I had not known him.”

Then I climbed the heights, and looked out upon the graveyard sea. The wind was slowly shifting to the westward. And above the low-lying mists I saw that the moist stars were shining; and one glittering globe after another of the great constellations appeared. Orion arose soon after twelve from the ocean depths. Then I looked across the dark waters homeward. And I went to search for my

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dory. Everywhere the land was black; yet I could see that, here and there, the upturning faces of restless waves were beginning to reflect, from a clearing sky, the light of a myriad midnight suns. And I said:—

“Peace, peace,—he is not dead, he doth not sleep;
He hath awakened from the Dream of Life.”

THE END



